

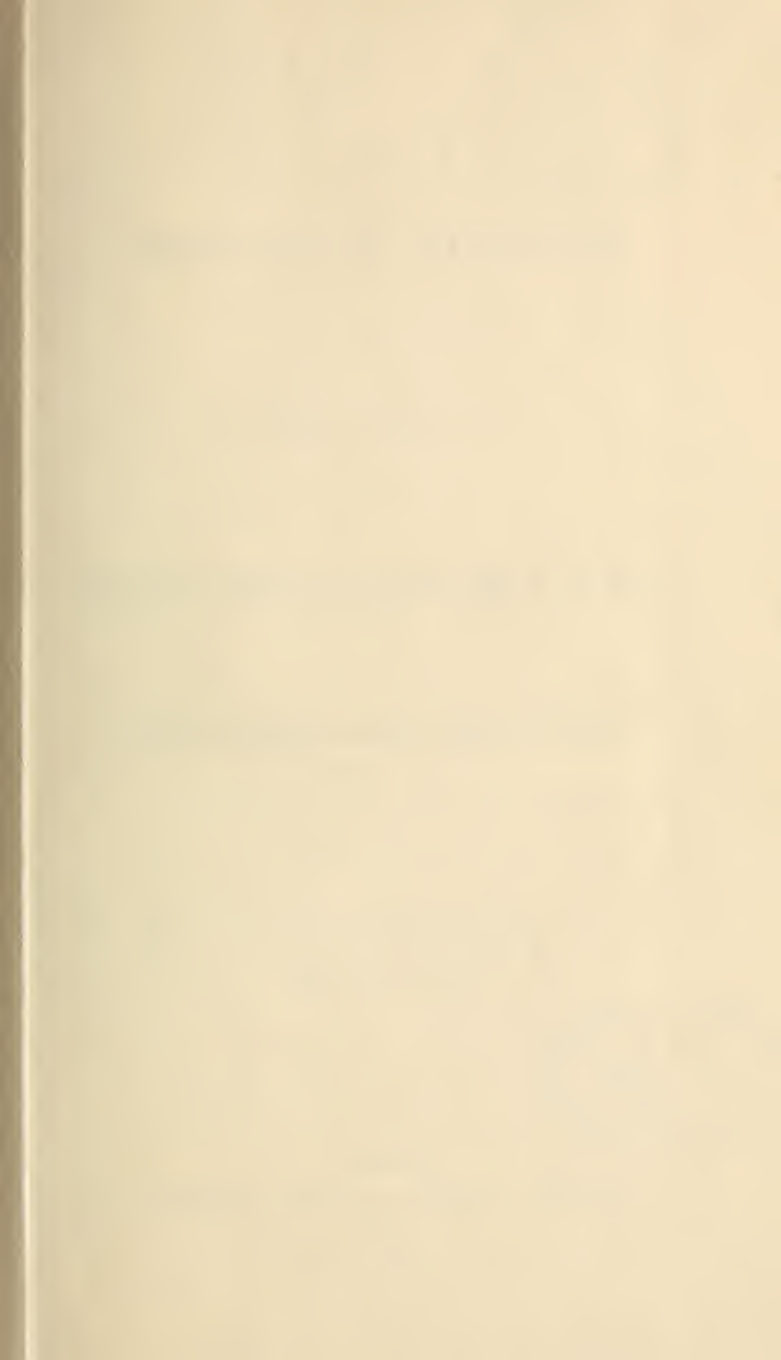
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AN
HISTORICAL ACCOUNT
OF
THE TOWNS

OF
ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE,
STALYBRIDGE, AND DUKINFIELD.

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BY EDWIN BUTTERWORTH,
BUSK, NEAR OLDHAM.



ASHTON:

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P R E F A C E.

THE Author of these pages feels conscious that he has endeavoured, as far as his humble opportunities permitted, to supply a concise sketch of the History and Topography of Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge, and Dukinfield; therefore, scarcely any apology is necessary in introducing the book. A comprehensive local history is generally admitted to be useful; and, if the present slight production should have the good fortune to be deemed to be in any way conducive to the public good, the wishes of the writer will be amply realized.

EDWIN BUTTERWORTH.

BUSK, OLDHAM,

December 9th, 1841.



HISTORY, &c.

THE PARISH of ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE is within the diocese of Chester, the archdeaconry of Chester, and the deanery of Manchester; the county palatine of Lancaster or Lancashire; the representative and assize division of South Lancashire; the hundred of Salford; the magisterial division of Ashton-under-Lyne; and the county division polling district of Ashton-under-Lyne.

The Parish is in one of the south-eastern parts of the county, bounded by the adjacent parishes of two adjoining counties—Yorkshire and Cheshire. On the north-east, a brook separates it from the district of Quick, in the parochial chapelry of Saddleworth, in the county of York. On the east, the river Tame divides it from the hamlet of Micklehurst, in Tintwistle, and the township of Staley, both in the parish of Mottram-in-Longdendale, in the county palatine of Chester; on the south, the same stream marks its limits from the township of Dukinfield, in the parish of Stockport, likewise in Cheshire. The Tame afterwards winding to the south, becomes the south-east boundary of the parish, where it is bordered by Dukinfield, in the parish and county just named. On the south-south-west, the district is bounded by the township of Haughton, and the township and chapelry of

Denton; on the south-west, by the township and chapelry of Gorton; on the west, by the townships of Droylsden and Failsworth. Haughton, Denton, Gorton, Droylsden, and Failsworth, are in the parish of Manchester. On the north, the parish is bounded by the township, parochial chapelry, and borough of Oldham. The north-north-east, north-north-west, west, and south-west boundary lines are chiefly imaginary. The form of this parochial tract is nearly a square, rendered oblong by a narrow arm on the north-east, intervening betwixt Oldham and Saddleworth, and a broader portion on the south-west, projecting betwixt Gorton and Dukinfield.

The *length* of the Parish, from Shepley Hall, at the south-south-west extremity, to Cross, at the north-north-east limit, is estimated at six and a half computed miles; the *breadth*, from Cat-Alley, near the west border, to Bottoms, at the eastern verge, is about five miles. The breadth of the north-east limb is generally about a quarter of a mile; and of the south-west angle upwards of a mile and a half.

The entire surface of the district comprises, customary, $4,208\frac{3}{4}$ *acres*, as ascertained in the survey made for the assessment of a fifteenth on each estate, in 15th James I. The number of statute acres is about 9,300.

There are four principal *divisions* in the parish, viz.: Ashton Town, Hartshead, Knott-Lanes, and Audenshaw. Ashton Town (now a parliamentary borough) is the most populous, yet the smallest; no portion of it being above

a mile from the centre of the town. It is on the south side of the parish, lined on the south by the river Tame, and possesses no subordinate divisions as yet. Hartshead, the largest of the four divisions, stretches to the east, north-east, and north of the town, extending to the centre of the parish. It contains the inferior districts or hamlets of Luzley-with-Lanes, (including a portion of the town of Stalybridge), Mossley, Hartshead, Hazlehurst, Lyme, Smallshaw, and Hurst. Knott-Lanes is of irregular form, narrow in its north-east and south-west parts, and expanding in the centre: it is situated to the north and north-east of the town, and is detached from Ashton Town division by parts of Hartshead and Audenshaw. Its sub-divisions are Cross Bank, Lees, Thornlee-cum-High Knowles, Alt Edge, Alt, Alt Hill, and Park. Audenshaw extends over the whole of the western side of the parish, and lies north-west, west, and south-west of the town. It is divided into Shepley, Little Moss, Waterhouses, and Woodhouses, vills or hamlets.—The sub-districts mentioned here are those enumerated in the Fifteenth Book; and, strictly speaking, they are still the only proper divisions; but an increase of population has added to the number of villages, whence we find, in the assessment books of the last and present century, numerous places of modern growth represented as hamlets, or inscribed as villages, that have taken the lead of their several divisions, or, in name, superseded such of the ancient spots as have not increased to an equal degree of consequence.—Dr. Aikin and Mr. Baines have stated the following places, all of recent creation, as hamlets of Ashton-under-Lyne:—Boston, Charlestown, (adjacent to

and now part of Ashton Town), Stalybridge, Sour Acre, (not, as often erroneously written, Tower Acre), Hey Chapel, and Hooley-Hill. Stalybridge, Ridgehill-Lane, and Sour Acre, are parts of the ancient hamlet of Luzley-with-Lanes. Hey or Hey Chapel is a modern portion of the ancient hamlet of Lees, now commonly expressed Lees-cum-Hey. Knott-Lanes and Wood Park hamlets have been taken from the ancient hamlet of Park a considerable time. The name of Knott-Lanes, as applied to a division, is ancient; but, as used for a village or hamlet, modern. So it is with Audenshaw: the division is of considerable antiquity, but the village or hamlet of that name is comparatively modern. The hamlets or villages of Audenshaw and Hooley-Hill are portions of the ancient hamlet of Shepley.

The TOWN and BOROUGH of Ashton-under-Lyne are situated within the division of the town. The borough and division are co-extensive. The town occupies the greater part of the division, and is built upon the flat of an extending eminence, which is steep on the south, and rises from the northern bank of the river Tame.

The town is upwards of five miles from Cross Bank, the most distant part of the parish, to the north-north-east; two and a half miles from Wood Park, the northern extremity; two miles or upwards from Buckley-Hill, the western point; about two miles from the termination of Hooley-Hill, the south-west verge; and the same distance from Heyrod, at the eastern limit. The respective distances from the surrounding towns are $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles

east of Manchester ; 1 mile west of Stalybridge ; 4 miles south of Oldham ; 7 miles north-north-east of Stockport ; $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of Hyde ; and 186 north-west of London. The geographical position of the site is in north latitude $53^{\circ} 25$, and west longitude $2^{\circ} 8$.

The derivation of the term Ashton is apparently satisfactory ; the *Estun* of the ancients in inquisitions and surveys of the county, being manifestly formed of *æyc*, an ash, and *tun*, an enclosed place or town ; the enclosed *dun* or *tun ton* of Ashes. In the era when a Saxon chief fixed upon the mount the first habitation of the subsequent Thanes of Ashton-under-Lyne, the precipitous banks of the Tame were doubtless deeply shrouded by the ash. It is difficult to determine the origin of the affix "Under Lyne, or Line." Dr. Ormerod, the learned historian, of Cheshire, is of opinion that it is so termed owing to the situation of it below the *Lime* of Cheshire. The designation Ashton sub Lima, used in Sir John de Assheton's rent roll, appears to give countenance to the conjecture of the Doctor. The fact of Ashton never having been recorded as subordinate to Lime in any manner bears strongly against the accuracy of this idea ; and still the Asshetons and Leghs, of Lime, were closely connected with each other. By a decree of the Earl of Derby, 11 Henry VII., "Sir Piers Lygh and his heires shall or mowe bere ye same armes whartly, so they be not in the first quarter, as Sir Thos. de Assheton, with a bezant of gold, &c., for difference."* In this instance

* Whitaker's Richmondshire, folio 246, vol. 2, adtns., 1823.

the Leghs procure licence to have armorial bearing similar to the Asshetons, implying a superiority in the latter family. In an early survey of Manchester Manor, (Harl. MSS., Codex 2085, fol. 527, b. Baines' 4to.,) the manner of expression is "Ashton subter lineam,"—Ashton-under-Line. The river Tame was, for a time, the boundary of the Saxon Heptarchial kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia; and the affix may have arisen from the situation *upon the line* of division. The foundation of the place is to be attributed to the Saxons; and, therefore, to endeavour to trace the designation to the Roman period is, perhaps, to enter upon a time when this tract was nameless. Manchester, in Lancashire, and Aldmondbury, in Yorkshire, were stations of the Romans; and, in order to connect these towns, the conquerors were obliged to construct a road through the higher part of the tract of country which was afterwards the Parish of Ashton-under-Lyne. Remains of this road are still existing at *Street*, in the adjoining township of Failsworth. The better to facilitate the opening of the forests, and the subjugation of the natives, the legions threw up a trench across the hills, in a line with the iter. The Saxons, under feelings of admiration and lasting impression of the magnitude of this work, were induced to impart the distinguished appellative of *Under Lyne*, or beneath the trench. The name Lime is still perpetuated in the parish, in Limehurst; and it was anciently the denomination of an hamlet, no longer recognised. This hamlet might have been of more importance than the *Eston* of the Saxons, supposing Lime to have been the abode of a Saxon baron, the paramount lord of Eston.

In the Book of Assessment of a Fifteenth, temp. James the First, Ashton and Lyne appear to be deemed of equal magnitude. The utility of this distinctive is manifest on bearing in mind the large number of places of the name of Ashton.

The History of Ashton-under-Lyne is not barren of interest; the succession of the lords of this mesne barony, and a description of the customs and services of their dependants, form amusing traits of the feudal character. Dr. Aikin, Dr. Hibbert, and Mr. Baines, have hitherto been the principal writers on the topography of the parish: their articles illustrative of this subject are of a vigorous and comprehensive style.

The Rev. John Whitaker, historian of Manchester, an ingenious and singularly entertaining antiquary, asserts Ashton and other adjoining parishes to have been the first portions of Lancashire inhabited by the Setantii, or dwellers amidst the country of the waters, a wandering tribe, whom he believes to have invaded this part of the province five hundred years before the birth of Christ! The Druids were the priests of the Setantii and the other native tribes; and such of the priesthood as committed to memory by metre the distinguished acts of the chiefs, were called the Bards. The early mansion of Bardsley is conjectured to have been the field or grove of the Druidical bards. The antiquities of the parish connected with the remote era of druidism were in existence within memory, and consisted of two circular basons wrought out of solid rock. The Medlock now flows over part of

the rock. The larger is yet discoverable below a weir or dam at the coal-works in Rocher Vale, Knott-Lanes ; it is six feet in diameter and three in depth. The smaller, now buried under an embankment, is perfectly circular and smooth within, and is represented to be of the somewhat extraordinary dimensions of nine inches in width and eighteen feet in depth. Several circumstances indicate that they have been wrought by art for druidical rites. According to Borlase, such basons were for "lustrations and purifications by water." These remains were known by the common name of *Pots and Pans*. A cell, once inhabited as a human dwelling, was excavated out of rock on the summit of a perpendicular cliff overlooking Rocher Vale. The legend of the hamlet points to this lone spot as the scene of a tragical deed, perpetrated upon a female. The works of the Romans have been already associated with the history of the parish. The Roman way from Manchester to Aldmondbury skirted the section of the parochial tract called Lyme or Line, and after traversing Oldham entered Ashton-under-Lyne parish near Lees, passed Hey (not Haigh chapel as erroneously written) chapel, and immediately afterwards entered Saddleworth.

The Kinderton, Stockport, and Almondbury iter passed the south-eastern borders of the parish. Mr. Whitaker says "this way extended into Ashton parish, near the foot of Stalybridge, was the third road from the station, (Stockport) and is denominated Staley-street for a mile together." The first sentence is obviously incorrect, for the direct line would be through Staley, on the opposite

side of the Tame, and therefore not through Ashton. There cannot be a doubt as to the certain bearing of this way all along the Staley side of the Valley of the Tame.

I have alluded to the Tame as the line of division of the early Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia.

Dr. Dunham Whitaker contends that the Ribble separated these small states. It is not improbable that both rivers were the boundaries at different periods.

This is the era in which there is much reason to place the erection of the rudely fortified abode of a Northumbrian chief, and of the huts of his serfs, on the summit of *Esdun*, the hill of ash trees.

Ashton was originally included in the Saxon parish of Manchester, not only in its ecclesiastical, but also in its civil character. The first edifice of christian worship was a chapel of Manchester, and the first Saxon possessor held the manor in fee of the greater lord of Manchester. In this manner the lordship and the parish became co-extensive; the ordinary parity of spiritual and secular possessions was created by this almost universal custom of early times. In modern days there are numerous exceptions to the rule; but in Ashton-under-Lyne, after upwards of nine centuries have passed away, the parish and the manor continue of equal extent or nearly so.

The name of Canute is traceable in the abbreviated

corrupted *Nute* or Knott-lanes, Knott-hill, &c. The tradition of the parish is, that the Danish conqueror crossed it in his way from the west to the east seas. Bottomley, the topographer of Saddleworth, has marked Knott-hill, in Saddleworth, as the spot where the hero of the descendants of the Frisian Goths harangued his fatigued troops.

William, the Norman, laid prostrate Danish usurpation and Saxon policy. The Saxons who dared to dispute his will were quickly despatched: those who implicitly submitted are the mesne lords denominated *drenches* in domesday book. The Saxon lord of Eston was apparently of the former and larger number. The great barons of the Norman chief distributed their vast possessions to their immediate dependants, the lesser barons; who provided for a still more inferior class: and these in their turn parcelled out the land to the tenantry, all holding in fee from their superior; the lower the rank, the more degrading was the nature of the subjection. Roger of Poictou, or Rogerius Pictavensis, was paramount lord of the land betwixt Ribble and Mersey, and afterwards of all Lancashire: he may be said to have been the founder of the great Barony, Earldom, and Duchy of Lancaster. Of his lesser barons was Albert Grelle, who held in fee the barony and parish of Manchester, to which the manor and chapel of Ashton-under-Lyne were appurtenant. Robertus Grelle has been represented as the first Norman grantee of Eston from Roger of Poictou, but this now appears to be incorrect. Emma, the daughter of Albert, married Ormeus Fitz-Eward or Ailward, on

whom Albert settled Eston as part of the marriage portion, to be held by him as superior lord. At the time of making the inquisition which was the basis of the Testa de Nevill, it was found that the land in Eston acquired by Orm in this marriage was a carucate (about one hundred acres); and it is held by Orm and his heirs on condition of yielding a rent of ten shillings per annum to the Baron of Manchester. The passage subjoined is from the Testa de Nevill, p. 404, and forms the first notice of the manor after the conquest; for Domesday Book is silent on this head.

“Albtus Gredle senior dedit Orm fil’ Eward à filia sua Emma in maritag’ una caruc’ Tre’ in Eston p xs. p annu heredes ipsius Orm’ tenent Tram illam.”

The remainder of the marriage portion consisted of a knight’s fee (480 acres) in Dalton, (Wigan parish) Parbold, and Wrightington, (Eccleston in Leyland parish) members of the Barony of Manchester.

Ormeus, the Norman, fixed his residence at Ashton-under-Lyne, and is designated Orme de Assheton. He was the parent of a knightly race, whose descendants, in the female line, have nearly attained the summit of English nobility. By Emma, daughter of Albertus Grelle, the paramount lord, he left issue two sons, Roger and Thomas. Ormeus is conjectured to have been living in the reign of Henry the First. His eldest son, Robert or Roger de Assheton, sometimes styled de Wrightington, received from Albertus Juvenis Grelle, a confirmation of the grant of Albertus, senior, of a carucate of

Assheton; and also a grant in fee of *all Assheton*. (Dr. Keurden's MSS., fo. 262) Roger, now termed Roger Fitz Orm de Ashton, inspired by the piety of his age, gave to God, St. Mary, and the abbey of Cockersand, his lands in Nuthurst. (Keurden MS. fo. 214) His second son, Thomas, with consent of his father, granted lands to Robert Buron (Byron) "pro homagio et servicio." (MS. sans date, in possession of the Rector of Middleton, 1617.) The exertions of the succeeding lord enabled him to procure the privileges of an independent parish for his chapelry of Ashton about 1280. The next member of the family on record is Thomas de Assheton, designated Sir Thomas, he was probably the first knight of the line, and son of Roger. (Keurden small vol., p. 54.) Some pedigrees describe Sir Thomas Asheton to have left two sons, Robert (who was a knight, and m. Elizabeth ——) and Gilbertus. His successor, however, was Sir John de Assheton, Knt., summoned to Parliament 17 Edward II. He was living 18 Ed. III., and married Margery, daughter of Sir John Byron, relict of Sir Edmund Talbot, who died 18 Ed. III., (Whitaker's Craven, p. 25) and Sir Henry Fenwick, Knts. A number of fines, of very early date, relating to lands and messuages in this manor, are preserved in the Chapter-house Record Office: *vide* Bundel. Rot. Ped. Finium de com. Lanc. temps. Ed. III. In the first year of the duchy of Lancaster, 25 Ed. III., John de Radcliffe, senior, is entered as plaintiff in a suit at law, against Hugh de Toft and Alicia his wife, de-forceants of the property in Ashton which William de Moston held: the issue is not recorded. In the fourth

year of the duchy, 29th Ed. III., John de Radcliff,* parson of the church of Bury, appeared as plaintiff against John de Asshelegh and Ellen his wife, deforceants, of messuages and lands in Ashton. The result of this suit is also unknown. (Baines' 4to., v. 2, p. 435) Sir John de Assheton was father of Sir Robert de Assheton, a courtier and a counsellor. He was returned to the parliament of 1324; and to this circumstance probably owed his future fortunes. On the 15th of May, 1359, 34 Ed. III., the king appointed him Governor of "Guynes," near Calais; in 37 Ed. III., Lord Treasurer of England, (in this capacity he witnessed a charter to Edmund of Langley, the king's son); in 42 Ed. III., Grantee of the Castle of Sandgate, prope Calais. According to fines in the Tower, he was Admiral of the narrow seas 43 Ed. III.; constituted Justice of Ireland 46 Ed. III., discharged 47 Ed. III.; Vice-chamberlain to the King 47 Ed. III., Treasurer of the Exchequer 49 Ed. III.; a Trustee with other eminent persons of royal property designed to endow the abbey of St. Mary-le-Grace, 50th Ed. III.; (Dugdale Mon. Ang., p. 944) one of the Executors of Edward the Third, 1377; Constable of Dover Castle and Warden of the Cinque Ports for life, 4 Richard II. (Weaver's Fun. Monuments, p. 268.) He gave the largest bell of the church of Dover Castle. He married first Elizabeth, whose father's name is unknown; and secondly, Philippa, widow of Sir or Lord Matthew de Gomey, (Inq. Keurden MSS., A.) In one pedigree he is inserted "Nuper

* In 29th Ed. III., this John de Radcliff paid a rent of half-a-mark to Henry, Duke of Lancaster, for lands in Assheton-under-Line.

defunctus," 4 Rich. II.; but he died Constable of Dover Castle, Jan. 9, 1384, 8 Rich. II. He was interred in the church of that castle, under a marble, whereon is his portraiture as a knight inlaid in brass, and an inscription : "Hic jacet Robertus Assheton, myles quondam constabularius Castri Dourie, et custos quinque Portuum qui obiit nono die Januar, Anno Domini millesimo CCC. octogesimo quarto, cujus anime propitiatur Deus. Amen." Philippa, second wife of this knight, married secondly, Sir John Tiptoft, Knt., and died May 3, 1417. The record of the extent of Manchester manor in Keurden's MSS., fo. 274, (Baines' 4to., vol. 2, p. 182) states Robert de Ashton to hold of the lord, for the term of his life, two bovates in Denton.

Sir Robert was father of Thomas de Assheton, William, LL.D., Eleanor, (who married John Berkley, Esq.), and also of an Henry it is conjectured. Henry signed the treaty of peace betwixt Edward III. and John, King of France, 8th of May, 1360. Thomas, the eldest son and heir, was distinguished in his youth for an ardour of military fame; and he captured the royal standard of Scotland, at the battle of Durham or Neville Cross, 17th of October, 1346.—Dr. Aikin states, that he was knighted for his heroism on this occasion; and is of opinion that he instituted the custom of riding the Black Lad, to commemorate this event.—Mr. Baines (12mo., vol. 1, p. 491) observes, that the king knighted Ashton and Coupland, another Lancashire esquire, who distinguished himself in the battle; but the same author, (4to., vol. 2, p. 539) on the authority of Rymer's

Fœdera, (vol. 7, p. 490; vol. 9, p. 425) corrects the error of the creation of knighthood on Ashton, he being termed an esquire forty years after this period. Coupland certainly received the honour. On the 7th of Jan., 1385, 9 Richard II., the king granted him letters of permission and protection to accompany John of Gaunt into Spain. His younger brother, William de Assheton, is styled "Doctor of Laws to the Serene Prince Lord John, King of Castile and Leon." (Rymer.) The name of the lady of Thomas de Assheton is omitted in the genealogies.

His only son and successor was Sir John de Assheton, Knt. He was Knight of the shire for Lancashire 6, 12, and 13 Richard II.; and cut a high figure in the French wars. Froissart (tom. 1, p. 363) relates of him, that when before Noyon, a fortified village in Picardy, he leaped over a fortress wall, and, single handed, attacked a dozen experienced French warriors, two of whom he wounded; but they scorned to seek revenge, and were astounded at his bravery. The translator of Froissart mistakes him for Sir John de Seton. He married Margaret, sister or daughter of Perkins de Legh, of Lyme; his daughter, Johanna, married Robert Davenport, of Bramhall, Knt. (Ormerod's Cheshire, v. 3, p. 401.) Collins states him to have been drowned at Norham; but it was his only son and heir, Sir John de Assheton.

Sir John de Assheton, who married a daughter of Sir Robert Standish, of Standish, Knt., or, as others say, a daughter of — Stanley, was father of John and Nicholas, both Knights: the latter was of the order of St. John, of Jerusalem or Rhodes. (Sir George Booth's Evidences.)

John, the eldest son, and the successor of his father, was created a Knight of the Bath at the coronation of Henry the Fourth, Oct. 13, 1399. (*Anti's Knights of the Bath*, appen., f. 22.) Sir John, in 1412-13, was successful in attempts to render his subordination to the superior lord merely nominal. The custom roll and rental of Sir John, dated 1422, 1st Henry VI., is a valuable record of the tenures of his tenantry, and an interesting illustration of the manners of lord and serf. It is much too detailed to be treated of in this place; and is, therefore, more appropriately assigned to the article *Manorial Rights, Customs, &c.*

Sir John was chosen Knight of the Shire 1413, 1st Henry V.; appointed Seneschal of Bayeux 1417, 5th Henry V., in which capacity he received, on the 14th of December, 1417, the king's command to protect the religious within Bayeux. In 7th Henry V., he became Bailiff or Constable of Constance, and Captain of Hadupais. He was living 1427, 5th Henry VI., (*Harl. MSS.*, Cod. 2085, fol. 400) and married first Jane, daughter of John Savile, of Tankersley, county of York; Collins says Isabel, daughter of Elland, of Brighthouse, county of York: secondly, Margaret or Mary, daughter of Sir John Byron, of Clayton, Knt., who afterwards married John Talbot, of Bashall, Esq. The issue of the first wife was Sir Thomas Assheton, Knt., his successor; Robert, Lawrence, John, (omitted in some descents) Lucy, married first Sir Bertine Entwistle, Knt.; secondly, Richard Byron; thirdly, Ralph Shirley, Knt.: Margaret, married Thos. Langley, of Agecroft; Katharine, married

John Dukinfield; Elizabeth, married first Sir Ralph Harrington; secondly, Sir Richard Hammerton; Agnes, married Thos. Booth, of Barton, Esq.; Anne, married Dutton, of the county of Chester, Esq.; Mary, and Isabel. The second wife of Sir John left an only child, Ralph, who, by marriage with Margaret, cousin and sole heiress of Richard Barton, of Middleton, became seated at Middleton, and was knighted. He was the ancestor of the Asshetons of Middleton, who flourished as knights and baronets for upwards of three centuries; the female heiresses of the last male representative of which house married the heads of the noble houses of Suffield and Wilton, towards the close of the last century. The Asshetons, of Middleton, were the parent stock of the younger branches of Whalley, Downham, Cuerdale, Great Lever, Fayrsnape, &c. William Assheton, of Downham, (Whalley parish,) Esq., is reputed to be the only lineal descendant of the male line of the Asshetons now living in the county. Joseph Ashton, Esq., of Much Woolton, (Childwall parish) is said to be descended from the Ashtons of Ashton-in-Mackerfield, a collateral line of the Asshetons of Middleton.

Sir John de Assheton died 7th Henry VI., 1428, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Sir Thomas de Assheton; married 3 Henry V., Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Byron, of Clayton, Knt, sister of his father's second wife. Unlike a long line of ancestors of military repute, Sir Thomas, when young, attached himself more to the study of the laboratory than the feats of the field. In an age prone to belief in witchcraft and other absurdi-

ties, the secret studies of Sir Thomas were viewed with suspicion; and he and several more knights of a similar studious habit, were considered as proficient in the *black art*. He and his friend, Sir Edmund Trafford, of Trafford, Knt., are stated to have been eminently skilled in the sciences of philosophy and chemistry, subjects little understood at that period. Their superior acquirements did not prevent them from apparently imposing upon themselves as well as others, by procuring a patent from the king in the 24th of Henry VI., 1455, "by the art or science of philosophy (alchemy) to work up certain metals, to transmute metals from their own kind, and then to transubstantiate them, by the said art or science, into perfect gold or silver, unto all manner of proofs and trials to be expected and endured, as any gold or silver growing in the mine." The sages commissioned to effect these golden projects, or, as they modestly designated themselves, "lovers of truth and haters of deception," boasted that man, by their powers, would enjoy perpetual youth. So credulous was the king, that he actually informed his people that the happy hour was approaching when all his debts would be totally discharged! (Baines' 12mo., vol. 1, p. 37.) The populace were alarmed at the supposed artfulness of the workers in alchemy, and their persons were endangered. But before their experiments could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, they too late discovered that they had omitted to prepare the elixir vitæ of their brethren; for the messenger of death invaded their laboratory, and spread a lethal gloom over their golden speculations. (Transactions of the Lancashire Antiquarian Society, part 1, p. 16, 17.) Sir Thomas,

the date of whose death does not occur in the genealogies, left issue, Sir John, his eldest son and successor; Edmund, who became seated at Chadderton, in Oldham, by marrying Johanna, daughter of Richard Radcliffe, or Radcliffe Chadderton, Esq.; Geoffrey, first of Shepley, in right of his wife, the daughter and heiress of Thomas Mannow, of Shepley; Nicholas, sergeant at law, 1443, justice of the king's bench, 1445, married Mary, daughter of Lord Brook; Elizabeth, wife of Sir John Trafford, of Trafford, Knt.; and Dulcia, married Thomas Gerard, of Bryn, Esq. He had also issue four other children, who probably died young.

Sir John having taken an active part in the quarrel betwixt the houses of York and Lancaster, was with King Henry VI. in the fatal battle of Northampton, July 10, 1460, where, with eight others, previous to the engagement, he received the honour of knighthood. He married twice; first, Dulcia, daughter of Sir Edmund Trafford, and secondly, Isabel, daughter of De Elland, and died 1508. By his first wife, Dulcia, he had issue, Sir Thomas Assheton, who was knighted at Ripon, 1491: he married first, Elizabeth, daughter and sole heiress of Ralph Staley, Esq., of Staley Hall, near Stalybridge; and secondly, Agnes, one of the ten daughters of Sir James Harrington, of Woolfage, Knt. Sir Thomas died in 1516, and was the last surviving male representative of the ancient family of the Ashtons, of Ashton-under-Lyne. By the heiress of Staley he had issue three daughters; his co-heiresses, Margaret, the eldest, married Sir William Booth, of Dunham Massey, Knt.;

Elizabeth married Randle Ashton, of Burton, Esq., but died without issue; and Joan married Sir John Leigh, of Boothes, near Nether Knutsford, Knt., by whom no issue. The children of Sir Thomas Assheton, by his second marriage, were John, who, though married, died issueless apparently, in his father's life time; and Alice, who married Sir Richard Hoghton, of Hoghton Tower, Knt., by whom Thomas Hoghton, Esq., who temporarily possessed the manor of Ashton, according to inquisitions post mortem of 22nd Elizabeth. Elizabeth, wife of Randle Ashton, Esq., possessed a third of the manor, she died 1557: and Joan, wife of Sir John Leigh, had also a portion. These possessions reverted to the Booths and Hoghtons; but the manor and chief part of the hereditaments fell to the share of the Booths, and the ancient name of Ashton became extinct, while the place passed into a non-resident family.

Sir William Booth was a lineal descendant of John de Booth, lord of the manor of Barton-on-Irwell. He was twice married, first to the heiress of Ashton and Staley; secondly, to Ellen, child of Sir John Montgomery. He was the parent of a large family. He died Nov. 9, 1519, and was succeeded by his eldest son, George Booth, Esq., who married Elizabeth Butler. He died 1531, and was followed by his eldest son, George Booth, Esq., who expired 1544, aged 28. His successor was his only son, William, who was but three years of age at his father's death. In 1578, he was knighted. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Warburton. He died Nov. 28, 1579, and had issue seven sons and

six daughters. He was succeeded by his second son, George, who was knighted about 1595, and was created a baronet May 22, 1611; which thus rendered him the first knight and baronet, and the tenth baronet. He was once high-sheriff of both Lancashire and Cheshire, and was a warm supporter of the parliamentary cause. He died Oct. 24, 1652, and his estates and honours were inherited by his grandson, George, (son of William, who died 1636) the future Baron Delamere, who was born Dec. 8, 1622. He represented Cheshire in parliament 1641 and 1651. He married first in 1638, Catharine, daughter and heiress of Theophilus Fienes, Earl of Lincoln; she died 1643; and he married secondly, Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Henry Grey, Earl of Stamford, by whom he had issue six sons and five daughters. Sir George embodied an army in Cheshire in 1659, ostensibly for the purpose of obtaining a "free parliament," but in reality for the purpose of restoring the Stuarts. This insurrection having failed, the attempt to restore monarchy was not resumed till the death of Oliver Cromwell, when Sir George formed one of a deputation for inviting Chas. II. to ascend the throne of England; and after the restoration he was elevated to the peerage, April 20, 1661, under the title of Baron Delamere, of Dunham Massey. Not being studious to please the court, he was subsequently disregarded by the king, and ill used by his successor, James II. He died August 8, 1684, and was succeeded by his second son, Henry, second Lord Delamere, who was, in his father's life-time, member for Cheshire in several parliaments. This nobleman had scarcely taken his seat in the House of Peers before he

was consigned to the Tower, and placed at the bar of the Lords accused of high treason. He had, with great zeal, acted for the interests of his country, and had been particularly anxious for the passing of the famous bill of exclusion, for which the great and good Lord Russell complimented him on the morning of his execution. For this he incurred the displeasure of the then Duke of York. After some months' confinement he was released; but on the accession of James II. he was again committed; and, on being admitted to bail, was committed a third time on a false accusation of high treason, January 14, 1685. He was shortly afterwards tried in Westminster Hall, before the Lord Chancellor, Jeffreys, his particular enemy, who was constituted Lord High Steward on the occasion. The jury consisted of twenty-seven peers, of a select class, summoned by Jeffreys. The impeachment accused his lordship of "conspiring with Charles Gerard, Esq., and other false traitors, to dethrone his majesty, James II., with assembling to make war in the county of Chester, and with a design to seize the city of Chester, and the castle of the said city." In support of this charge, a wretch of the name of Saxon was called, who had been clearly suborned to tender false testimony; and who deposed that Lord Delamere had sent for him to his lordship's house, at Mere, and had despatched him with a message to the Duke of Monmouth, to inform his grace that ten thousand men would be raised in Cheshire; but that the rising must be delayed from the first of June till Midsummer. His lordship made so full and able a defence, that he was pronounced not guilty, by the unanimous vote of the jury.

Happy was it for him that he had been tried by his peers, and not by such hireling juries as Lord Russell and others had suffered by. Subsequently he lived retired at Dunham Massey, till four years afterwards, on the arrival of the Prince of Orange in England, he raised a large force in Cheshire and Lancashire, to aid in effecting the revolution, and marched to meet the prince at Windsor. On the 17th of December, 1688, he, together with the Marquis of Halifax and the Earl of Shrewsbury, were charged by Prince William with a message to King James, commanding him to leave his palace and to renounce his throne. Here is a striking instance of the mutability of fortune. King James, to the honour of Lord Delamere, said, when in retirement in France, that none of the messengers behaved with so much respect as Lord Delamere. On the 13th of February, 1688, Lord Delamere was appointed a member of the Privy Council, and on the 9th of April, 1689, Chancellor of the Exchequer; by letters patent, dated April 17th, 1689-90, 2nd of William and Mary, he was created Earl of Warrington, in Lancashire. He died Jan. 2, 1693, and was succeeded by his second son, George, second Earl of Warrington, and third Baron Delamere, who died Aug. 2, 1758, without male issue, by which the earldom became extinct; but the title of Baron Delamere passed to his cousin, Nathaniel Booth, Esq. Mary, only child and sole heiress of the second Earl of Warrington, conveyed the family possessions, by marriage, to the Right Hon. Henry or Harry Grey, fourth Earl of Stamford, who became possessed of the manor of Ashton-under-Lyne in 1758. He died May 30, 1768; his consort

died 1772. He was succeeded by his eldest son, George Harry Grey Booth, fifth Earl of Stamford, and F.S.A. He was created Baron Delamere and Earl of Warrington April 22, 1796. He married Henrietta Cavendish Bentinck, second daughter of William, second Duke of Portland. He died May 23, 1819, and his titles and estates were inherited by his eldest son, George Harry Grey, sixth and present Earl of Stamford, and fourth and present Earl of Warrington; Baron Delamere, of Dunham Massey; Baron Grey, of Groby; Baron Bonville and Harrington; Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the county of Chester. He married Henrietta Charlotte Elizabeth Charteris, daughter of the Right Hon. Francis Lord Elcho, son of Francis, fifth Earl of Wemyss: she died 1838. His lordship's family consists of a grandson and two daughters. The present earl appears recently to have evinced much solicitude for the prosperity and welfare of the inhabitants of Ashton-under-Lyne. For the purpose of maintaining the due value of property in Ashton, as compared with the increased worth of land in the adjacent districts, he procured an Act of Parliament a short time ago (1838-9), effecting a considerable change in the tenures by which lands are held from the manor. In order to create a general feeling of kind regard and good will, the earl occasionally resides at the Old Hall, the ancient mansion of the Asshetons, which was first fitted-up for the temporary residence of his lordship, in August, 1838. On the 22nd of August, 1838, this nobleman visited the town, to superintend the arrangements for his abode at the manor house, and to view the parish church.

This event was commemorated by the presentation of a congratulatory address to the earl, and a public dinner of a number of the principal inhabitants.—For upwards of fifty years, the extensive manorial possessions of the Stamford family were managed by the late Mr. Hugo Worthington and his family, with considerable efficiency; and the retirement of that highly respected gentleman from the official situation which he held under the lord of the manor, was deeply regretted by those persons with whom his duties brought him into connexion.

The OLD HALL of Ashton-under-Lyne probably occupies what was the site of an out-post, or rude fort of Northumbria, in the Saxon period. The Norman possessor of the manor appears to have erected a tower here; and, from the pedigree and rent roll of Sir John de Assheton, it is evident that the hall and its yard were both in a complete state in the 3rd of Richard II., 1380, for in the covenant regarding the swine of the Assheton tenantry are these words:—"that the swine are allowed to run in the demesnes of the town, excepting only the Little Park and Hall yards." Dr. Aikin gives 1483 as the supposed date of the fabric, which may be true of the present edifice. In the reign of Henry VI., Sir John de Assheton resided here in a style of feudal grandeur, and with all the hospitality of manner which characterized the gentry of the olden time. The great room called the hall was frequently a scene of rude festivity, where, if the amusements were not highly refined, they were thoroughly jovial. Strict in the exaction of manorial dues, Sir John was generous to all whom he conceived

deservedly merited his approbation. In accordance with the true spirit of chivalry, he gave more countenance to the arts of war than those of peace; and whilst the bowmen were suffered to cluster around him on festive days, the rustics of the fields were placed in a position beneath the men of arms. The appearance of the Old Hall is striking, but sullen; and when surrounded by stately gateways, court-yards, moats, and draw-bridges, it would assume a formidable air. The free and intruding hand of modern improvement has gradually destroyed these needless works of defence, and the greater part of the mansion is as much modernised as its ancient form will allow. The pile is large and irregular, and stands on the south side of the church-yard, overlooking the valley of the Tame. The south part of the building resembles a prison, and was used as such within the last century.

Dr. Aikin remarks, that the Ashtonians once regarded the prison of the Old Hall as a kind of bastile to the town. The prison portion is a strong but rather small edifice, with two round towers, one at each angle, clothed in ivy, and bearing a gloomy aspect. These towers are designated "The Dungeons." They appear only to have been conveniences for the prisoners, as they have door places, a flag for the feet, and a rail to prevent them from falling backwards, with drains from the bottom. They are not large enough for a person to live in, but seem to have been added to make the place look more formidable. A large room used to be hung with gilded leather, and there was a fine painting of St. George and the dragon in the

window; handcuffs, fastened to the wall, were remaining not many years ago.* Within the prison were two court-yards, an inner and an outer, with strong walls. Over the outer gate was a square room, ascended to, from the inside, by a flight of stone steps, very ancient: it was always called the Jailer's Chapel, as it was supposed that prayers were occasionally read in it to the prisoners. This ruinous room was taken down about 1794. The adjacent house was inhabited by an aged man, who remembered a gate being open through the house in 1733. On the west side of the hall the walls were strong, and contained numbers of loopholes. A short distance is a close which has been called Gallows Field, doubtless the place of execution, when the lord of Ashton had power of life and death:

“When lords could hang their serfs at once,
Nor give a reason—why;
And ladies loved that tourney most,
Where most were doomed to die!”

The manorial rights and customs of Ashton-under-Lyne are profuse—the greater number of them obsolete. Taking them in distinct heads they chiefly resolve into tenures, services in money, kind, and labour; restriction as to soke, manorial heriots, incidental privileges, royal grants of frankpledge, courts, markets, and fairs.

Orm Fitz-Eward, the first mesne lord of Ashton of the Norman line, paid a tribute of ten shillings to

* Aikin's Manchester, 1795, p. 225-6. Barritt's Collections, Chetham Library, 4to., p. 58.—In Aikin are three views of parts of the hall.

Albertus Grelle, Baron of Manchester, the paramount lord. Roger, the son of Orm, held Assheton and Heton of Albertus, grandson of Albertus, by the service of ten shillings for each of these manors, and a soar of hawks. Gilbert Fitz-Orm, whom I take to be of the Fitz-Orms of Assheton, held his lands by paying annually three-pence, or some spurs, to Benedict Gurnet, the heir of Roger de Heton, in thanage. (Tes. de Nevill.)

Robert de Holland held part of the knight's fee in Dalton, Parbold, &c., that was anciently the Asshetons'. In Gregson's *Fragments of Lancashire*, p. 4, it is said, that Robert de Holland received Assheton by gift of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, to whom he afterwards proved faithless. Robert de Holland appears to have been only authorized to receive the services due from Assheton to Thomas Plantagenet, as Earl of Lancaster.

Edward I., in the 13th year of his reign, 1284, is described (upon what authority I have hitherto been unable to discover) to have granted to Sir Thomas de Assheton, reputed son of Roger, right of view of frank-pledge, and of a market and fairs in his manor. (See article markets and fairs.) The first part of the transactions of the Lancashire Antiquarian Society states the date of this grant to be unknown. It was confirmed temp. Henry VI., and the confirmation has been taken for the original grant.

In the same year he was required to pay twenty-two shillings annual rent to Sir Richard de Kirkeby, who

was either a lessee or trustee for Robert Grelle, or Gresley, the superior lord, son of Peter, great grandson of the younger Albertus Grelle.

Sir John de Assheton was chartered to have free warren in his demesne lands of Ashton, Aug. 27, 1335, 9th Edward III. (Rot. Chart. Par. Unic. m. 23.)

In the 3rd of Richard II., 1380, Sir John de Assheton, Knt., covenants with his tenants, that "they shall have free pannage for their hogs or swine, from harvest to seed time, in all his demesnes, except in the *Little Park* and *Hall* yards, on condition they are ringed, and no trespass done." (Barritt's MSS., in Manchester College Library, copied from a paper of Sir Raphe Assheton, of Middleton, Bart., 1749.)

In 1412, 13th of Henry IV., or 25th February, 1413, 1st of Henry V., Thomas (Magister) de la Warre, ninth Baron of Manchester, and also Rector of Manchester, empowered Thomas Longley, (Langley) Bishop of Durham, William Thyrnyng, Miles Johes Henege Nichus Mott, parson of Swynshead, and others, to inquire into the degree of subjection of the Lord of Ashton to Manchester: they accordingly issued an indenture representing Sir John de Assheton to hold the manor with its appurtenances of Thomas Lord de la Warre, by fealty, service of twenty-two shillings annually, and one hawk, or forty shillings, and a contribution called putura, to the maintenance of the foresters of Horewich and Blakelegh, as part of the manor of Manchester. Dated at Swineshead,

and witnessed by Radpho de Stanley, Johe de Pekington, Johe de Hilton, Rico de Radecliff, Adam de Leuer. (Harl. MSS., Codex 4,900, fo. C.)

Another document of the same date, states Sir John to have held Assheton of Sir Richard de Kirkeby, and Sir Richard to have held it of Thomas Lord de la Warre, by fealty. The rent due from Sir John to Sir Richard is entered as *one penny* per annum; and the amount yielded by Sir Richard to Lord de la Warre is marked as twenty-two shillings, a circumstance which occasions doubt and distrust of the assertions in this record. It is added that Sir Richard was acquitted of twenty-one shillings and eleven pence, reducing the rent to *one penny*. The sum of one penny formed the whole service subsequently due from Sir John and his successors to Kirkeby or de la Warre, and their successors, as paramount lords. Mr. Baines (vol. 1, 12mo., p. 490) places the date of this transaction in the 5th Henry VI., citing MSS., British Museum, 2085 E, p. 410. Kirkeby or the Baron de la Warre, further conceded to Sir John a confirmation of his right of "view of frankpledge (and incidental privileges) of the tenants and inhabitants of the manor and town of Assheton, with tollage, fishery, and stallage." A contribution was previously levied from "Ashton-under-Lyne and its members, to the maintenance of the Bailiff (the lord's sergeant sworn) of the Barony of Manchester, and his assistants."

In the 4th of Henry VI., Thomas de la Warre, Clerk, is recorded to have died, seized of Ashton-under-Line manor, &c., as superior lord.

By the activity and care of the Sir John de Assheton, Knt., of the reigns of Henry V. and VI., a detailed and accurate survey of his possessions was taken, the results of which have been entered in his "Custom Roll and Rental" of the manor, bearing date 1422, 1st of Henry VI. This curious document was in the hands of Sir Raphe Assheton, of Middleton, Bart., 1749; and a copy came into the possession of Jonah Harrop, of Bardsley, Gent. (several transcripts have been taken); and Dr. Hibbert has added to the interest of the MS. by his profound illustrative notes, entitled "Illustrations of the Customs of a Manor in the north of England, by Dr. Hibbert, of Edinburgh." A copy of the Custom Roll and Rental appears in the "History of Ashton-under-Lyne," published in 1823. The MS. is too large to be comprised within my limits; and I shall, therefore, endeavour to elucidate its general features. Mr. Baines (4to., vol. 2, p. 543) remarks, that this custumale "casts much light on the early customs and manners of the parish, which, though not differing much from other manorial customs, there is a minuteness of detail that interests while it informs; and exhibits at once a state of society where service was substituted for money, and local authority for national law."

The roll of the names of the tenants presents the following choice appellations:—"Magot, that was the wife of Richard of Hadfield; William and Robert the Walkers, Syssot, that was the wife of Patrick; Malkyn, that was the wife of Diccon Hoggeson; Mergot of Stealey, Alys, that was Pole's wife; Nan of Windebank, Roger

the Smith; Syssot, that was the wife of Thomas the Cook; Hobbe Adamson, Roger the Baxter, William the Arrowsmith, Jak the Spencer, Elyn the Rose, Jenkyn of the Wood, Thomlyn of the Leghes, Jak the Mercer, John the Slater, Roger the Cropper, Robert the Wright, Syssot, that was the wife of Jak of Bardsley; Rauf and Robyn of Assheton, the Heir of Hobbe of the Leghes, Jankin of the Winterbotham, Magot, that was the wife of Jenkyn the Cropper, and Tomlyn the Tailor." This list of the artisans and husbandmen of Assheton of the fifteenth century indicates the origin of many surnames still subsisting in the parish. It is not surprising that the distinct profession of an arrowsmith should have occurred in the town of Ashton four centuries ago, at a time when bowmen were the "flower of the English armies."

In the first page of the roll is inserted the covenant respecting the swine of the tenantry, 3rd Richard II.; (see p. 27) and a decree, 1st Henry IV., inflicting a forfeiture of 20s. at the lord's court, on such tenants as did not multer at the lord's milne. In the order made for the receipt of rents at the court, for the year 1422, the style of the lord is "John of Assheton, Knt., the which came out of Normandy." All the tenants were required to pay their rent twice a year, at the feasts of St. John the Baptist and St. Martin,—to give their presents at *Yule*, Christmas; and in return the "lord shall ffeed all his said tenants and their wives, upon Yule-day, at the dinner. They shall send neither man nor woman in their

name, except their son or daughter.”* Each tenant who had a plough was to *plow* two days, and each who had half a plough one day, in wheat and lenten seeding. Every tenant, “when they bin charged,” was to harrow a day, in seeding time; each of them was to cart ten cartful of *turre* from the Moss to Ashton; shear four days in harvest; and cart a day corn. At the death of a tenant—his or her heirs were commanded to pay a principal “the best beast they have, which other deed (is to be done) next after (the tribute) holy kirk.”

“At the period in which this knight, Sir John, settled upon the estate of Assheton (says Dr. Hibbert), tenures had assumed that definite form to which were applied the term *Soccage*, a word of obscure etymology, supposed to denote privilege or liberty, in contradistinction to the indeterminate services of more ancient feuds. By the necessity imposed upon feudatories of dispensing with the military obligations of part of their tenants, an approach was making in the feudal system towards a civil establishment. The dependants thus exempted from the military service, then the most honourable and distinguished employment, cultivated the land, attended to the labours of husbandry, and made a return of corn, cattle, or money, in lieu of other obligations. The residence of the lord had long conferred upon Ashton the appellation

* The Yule Feast, synonymous to Ale Feast, was a saturnalia in which rank gave way to equality. In Yorkshire and some parts of Lancashire it was customary to burn a large log of wood on Christmas Eve, called the “Yule log;” and for all the family to take a mess of creed wheat, boiled in milk and spiced, called *furmenty*.

of manor. The obligations of the tenants at will were of a base and servile nature, yet determinate, and therefore comprehended under the name of *Villanum Soccagium*. They were excluded from partaking in the honours of the 'tented field,' being destined, on the manor of their lord, to perform the duties of civil and agricultural drudgery. Thus the opprobrium cast upon such menial employments as ploughing the lord's lands, or carting the lord's fuel or manure, originating from the high sense entertained, in this early period, of military allegiance, is transmitted to later times, in the debasing idea, that the name of villain, originally nothing more than a feudal term, never fails to excite. Soccage labour was familiarly called boon work; hence an old adage still retained when a man is supposed to be working for nothing, 'that he has been served like a boon shearer.'"

It is remarked, that, in some manor houses of Lancashire, once dedicated to the annual scenes of festivity at Yule or Christmas, may be observed an elevation of the floor at the extremity of the great hall, or, in the place of it, a gallery which stretches along one side of the room, with the intention that it should accommodate the lord and his family, as that they might not be annoyed by the coarse rustic freedoms, which the tenants would be too apt to take with them, during the hours of their conviviality. In a hall of this kind, in the manor house of Assheton, we may imagine the Yule fire to be kindled; while, in a gallery, or on a raised floor, Sir John, his lady, and family, together with his kinsmen, Elland, of Brighthouse, and Sir John Byron, are feasting apart, yet attentive to the frolics or old songs of the company below.

It was on these occasions that pig tankards were used, and horns that bore the names of the Saxons and Danes, whom the Normans had ousted out of their possessions. We may suppose that on such festivals as these, the wooden bowl or horn would pass freely through the hands of Sir John's tenants at will, all clad in their best hoods, and brown woollen jackets and petticoats. The ancient musical instruments were a characteristic kind of fiddle, and a stringed instrument called virginals. The provincial songs, few of which lasted less than half an hour, rehearsed the deeds of Launcelot du Lake, the giant slayer; Ranulph, of Chester, and his crusade; and Roger de Calverley's amorous feats. In order to preserve as much as possible, the degree of decorum necessary at such meetings, there was frequently introduced a diminutive pair of stone stocks, of about eighteen inches in length, for confining within them the fingers of the unruly. This instrument was entrusted to the general prefect of manorial festivities, the king of misrule, whose office it was to punish all who exceeded his royal notions of decency. Accordingly, such a character appears among the list of Sir John's tenants, under the name of Hobbe the King. A festivity of this kind, wrung from the pockets of vassals, acquired, in derision, the appellation of *drink lean*; and it is not improbable that the name of landlord was originally attached to the host of an inn, as a satirical allusion to the *manorial* landlord.

The rustic jubilees of the Gyst Ale, guising, (or, more properly, disguisings) termed also marlings, were celebrated in the spring, after the fields had been manured

with marl, preparatory to the sowing of wheat. They were the principal feasts or ales in Lancashire. For the celebration of the gyst ale of a township, contributions were raised from all ranks of society;—the lord of the manor, the esquire, or the farmer, whose bounty might be supplicated, came forward, and announced the sum that he intended to give. The treasurer of the feast exclaimed *a largesse!* The populace demanded, with one voice, *from whom?* The sum was not then actually published; but it was vauntingly proclaimed that the donor, who had always, on these occasions, the title of lord prefixed to his name, had contributed a part of several thousand pounds. After the collection had been made, an immense garland was formed of every flower the season afforded, being also decked with a profusion of ribbons; but the number and variety of silver, or silver-plated vessels, which were suspended from every part of it, constituted its chief attraction. The villagers, who were overwhelmed with rustic finery, then formed themselves into a procession, in which they were attended by an *Arbiter Elegantarium*, named the King. The fool was an indispensable character; a grotesque cap, a tail hanging to the ground, the usual appendage of a bell behind, and a formidable mask, constituted the peculiarities of his apparel. He was, in ancient times, mounted on a hobby, and his office, which was a lucrative one, from the money that he collected, was named *Hob riding*. Thus, in the manor roll of Assheton, Jak the Mercer paid to his lord, for such a privilege, the annual sum of 6s. 8d. These disguisings were practised to a late period; and formed a favourite amusement in “the spirit-stirring

times" of Queen Elizabeth. Sports denominated maskings, or mumblings, were prevalent amongst the peasantry of the parish as late as 1773. Similar frolics have been called churning.

The service of the tenants in yielding to the lord a principal at their death, has been noticed: this was evidently an heriot. According to general custom, the *second best* beast of the dying was the property of the priest; but in Assheton the lord was not entitled to his heriot till the *best* beast (the mortuary) had been delivered to the holy kirk.* This oppressive relic of ancient military subjection was found particularly galling; and its abuse was in some measure prevented by a statute of 21st Henry VIII. The clergy of the archdeaconry of Chester were anciently subject to an ecclesiastical mortuary of the Bishop.—Mr. Baines (History of Lancashire, 4to., vol. 2, p. 533) observes, that the feudal system prevailed here in all its details of degrading servility, for the villani soccagii were little better than serfs of the soil, whose utterance of expressions condemnatory of their condition would have been punished by executions at their own doors without any form of trial. The able historian of his native county proceeds to contrast the condition of the people in the past periods of feudal domination with their state in the present times of commercial enterprize. He truly remarks, that trade has tended to confer a freedom of action and of sentiment on

* It was usual to drive the beast before the corpse of the deceased at the funeral procession to church.

the lowest classes which would not have been tolerated in the days of the early lords of Assheton.—A strongly wrought picture of the condition of the serf of the fifteenth century compared with that of the factory artisan of the nineteenth, follows. The vassals of the generation of Sir John de Assheton were, however, doubtless possessed of an equal amount of happiness with their more intellectual and improved descendants of our own times. The philanthropist who undertakes to compare the features of the feudal system with the character of the factory system, engages upon a momentous inquiry—the former relating to the domestic condition of our early agriculturalists, and the latter to the situation of a vast diversified manufacturing community.

The free tenants enjoyed their lands by a tenure originally of military service, compromised for slight acknowledgments of money. The list of their names is free from appellations denoting any menial occupation of life; and the better to define the distinction betwixt the free and the lowly tenants, an ordinance, inserted in the custom and rent roll, settles the degree of precedence to be observed by the female members of their families in taking their seats in the parish kirk on the sabbath.

One of the most remarkable of the tenures in this manor is expressed in these terms:—"Syssot, that was the wife of Patrick, for a house and garden at the Milne, she shall shear four days in harvest, and she shall give a principal at her dying; and for her term shall pay 2s. and a present at Yole to the value of 4d." Another runs

thus:—"Rauf of Assheton and Robyn of Assheton have the Sour Car, Gulde Rode, and Stane Rynges, for the term of their lives; Rauf, of the gifte of John of Assheton, Knyghte, the elder; and Robyn, of the gifte of John of Assheton, Knyghte, the younger, the Farm." Richard of Bardesley's render for Bardesley was a rose.

The number of tenants holding by free will* appears to have been 120: of these the holders of tenements or parts of tenements amounted to 89; of cottages 25; of a cottage and garden, 1; of the kilne, bakehouse, smithy, barn, and the two corn mills, 1 each. The free tenants who held lands for limited periods were 30, five of whom leased intakes in Palden wood, anciently the largest in the parish, and others farmed the Leghes (Leys' fields, i. e. Lees), the Knolles (the rising grounds), and the Hursts (the thickets), from which they derived their names. Those whose leases of lands terminated on the annunciation of the Virgin Mary, were 11; at the term of Pentecost, 8; of St. John the Baptist, 21; of St. Michael the Archangel, 18; of "the holy" St. Martin, 11. In addition to these, there were the "*Libi tenent de Termo Natal Dmi*," fourteen in number, six tenants for term of life, and one tenant for a term of ten years. The entire number of the holdings in lease of Sir John amounted to 240. Several tenants held many tenements each, for instance, Richard of Bardesley held seven; Thomas of the Leghes, six; Ricus de Moston, six;

* Or soccage, who took their tenements for twenty years, or "for twenty winter terms."

Willielmus de Aldwinshagh, five ; Thomas Claydon, five ; Petrus de Shepley, five.—The total number of tenants of Sir John is estimated to have amounted to 190, not including the eleven tenants given to “Thomas of Assheton,” his son and heir, at the period of his son’s marriage. The turvery of the Moss was chiefly in the lord’s hands. The free tenants who made “ffine yearly” for the making of the milne, &c., were four ; the individuals who rendered a “ffine” of 3s. 4d. each, total 20s., for the privilege of procuring contributions at the Gyst Ale, or Village Feast, were six in number ; and one of the rustics paid for the privilege of “Hob-riding” at the feast, his buffoonery being well remunerated by the gifts of the amused.

The rents of the tenants at will varied greatly, according to the size of the farms ; the average rent may be loosely estimated at seventeen shillings each. The cottages yielded, on an average, three shillings each per annum. The presents for the Yole dinner varied from four-pence to twenty-pence each. The sums paid by the free tenants varied from sixpence to seven shillings and one penny. Few of the rents of the remaining tenants exceeded two shillings each.—The annual payments of the holders of “the son and heir” varied from ten to thirty shillings each. The “turvery of the moss” was valued at £5 yearly. The profits of the “courts and fines” amounted to forty shillings ; and the tolls of the market and fairs, to two marks. The sum total of Sir John’s rent, exclusive of services and presents, produced £27 12s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. (this is erroneous if the items are cor-

rectly transcribed); and his son's marriage portion of £9 2s. 7d. The explanations of the customs and byelaws enacted in the court of the manor for the preserving of order and propriety of conduct amongst the tenantry, are not the least engaging parts of the ancient table of the rents and laws of Assheton. Due care was evinced in binding the tenants to maintain their farms in good condition; in requiring them to multer at the lord's milne, and none other;* and to suffer the corn of the lord to be ground first before that of any other person, without mulcture or service on his part to the milner, other than voluntary. The consent of the free tenants "to be Infeoffed in the Hall mote of Assheton, after the custom and burgales of the town," is registered,—with a signification of their willingness to participate in inquests composed of the free tenants and the tenants at will. The tenantry invested Sir John with power of distress by his bailey, on trespassers convicted by inquest. If the offenders could not be punished by loss of goods, the next remedy was the use of the stocks. Trespassers bent upon doing

* The obligation of tenants to grind at the mills of lords of manors is of high antiquity. The corn mills of all manors seem to have been possessed by the lords. At Assheton, John of the Edge appears to have been the milner, and the annual rent rendered by him for his two mills was 16s. 4d., the mills to be held up (repaired) by the lord. The general toll of the miller was the sixteenth vessel. If any one sold the corn growing on his own tenement, and secretly bought corn of other tenants of the lord, representing the purchased corn to be of another manor, therefore only liable to the "love socome" (twenty-fourth vessel), having been dried by other than the lord's fuel,—such offender, if convicted, was fined at the lord's will.

harm, and coming from a distance, were overcome by arrest executed by the offended, &c.; and those who concealed the transgressor, or were remiss in securing him, brought upon themselves the amercements of the court. Any tenant who became a rebel, engaged to forfeit his term of lands, and to remove out of the manor and parish. The free tenants daring to dispute the customs of the manor deservedly incurred the loss of their tenements, and also the love of the superior. A fighter was liable to a penalty of half-a-mark for his first offence; if still contumacious, he forfeited a mark; and a third violation of the peace raised the fine to twenty shillings. A resetter of such disorderlies was also to abide the sentences of the inquest for his officiousness.—The document enumerating the forms in the Parish Church, and the families by whom they were occupied in the fifteenth century, will be treated of in the account of the Church.

In the earliest history of Norman tenures (says Dr. Hibbert) the lord of Assheton had absolute power of life and death; strong dungeons were constructed near the manor house, the remains of which still appear; and a meadow near the town, still called Gallows-field, was selected for a place of summary execution. But as civil liberty gained ground the severity of the feudal system was ameliorated by the institution of the Court Baron, which in time became necessary to constitute a manor.

Having brought this copious, but, I fear, faint elucidation of the customs of Ashton manor in 1422, to a

close, it will be proper to describe the privileges and customs subsequently acquired or claimed.

I find that Sir Thomas de Assheton, the son and successor of Sir John, preferred a claim in the reign of Henry VI. to the exercise of the rights of piccage, weif, stray, theol. picag. et stalag. (Memoranda in Latin, Keurden fol. MS., p. 54.)—Piccage was money paid at fairs for breaking ground for booths; weif, a right to things which have no owners; stray, a claim to impound stray cattle, &c.; theol., toll, (toll of passage I presume); stalag., payments for the privilege of having stalls in the fairs or markets.

Of all the numerous usages of the manor, there is none so remarkable and perhaps none the origin of which it is so difficult to discover, as “the custom of riding the Black Lad,” the parading through the streets of the figure of a man in black apparel placed on horseback, a ceremony occurring annually on Easter-Monday, and possessed of great attractive powers to strangers. There is scarcely a topographer general or local, in print or in manuscript, who has described Ashton, and omitted to express his opinions concerning the “Black Lad.” It is reasonably inferred from the entire silence of the custom roll and rental of 1422 on the subject, that the custom had not then commenced; yet “Rauf of Ashton,” afterwards named “the Black Knight of Middleton,” whom Dr. Hibbert conjectures to have been the original of the personified, was living at the period referred to, but probably those appalling acts of his galling tyranny, if

he were the execrated, the memory of which continue after upwards of three centuries have expired, had not then been perpetrated. The date of the commencement of this custom is by one author placed in the latter end of the reign of Edward IV. Douce (MS. notes) speaks of it in these terms: "It is said to have arisen from there having been formerly a Black Knight who resided in these parts, holding the people in vassalage, and using them with great severity." The best received and most probable accounts of the causes of this commemoration, trace it to an ancient feeling of the inhabitants to mark with detestation, wanton acts of tyranny that occurred when the arbitrary sway of the feudal system was diminishing before comparative independence of action and liberty of speech of all classes. Dr. Aikin names the recorded share which Sir Raphe Assheton is believed to have taken in the acts producing this custom, but is of opinion from the sum allowed out of the manor to fit up the effigy, and from the existence of a suit of armour formerly placed upon it, and other matters, that Thomas de Assheton (whom he erroneously states to have been knighted) instituted the observance to commemorate his prowess at the Battle of Durham, or Neville Cross, in 1346, 19th Edward III., where he captured the standard of the King of Scotland. The doctor adds: he left the sum of ten shillings to fit up the figure, with his own suit of black velvet, and a coat of mail, of which the helmet is remaining. It must be again remarked that the custom roll and rental drawn up seventy-six years after the battle of Neville Cross, is destitute of any mention of the custom. In a metrical tale of tradition published

in Harrop's Manchester Volunteer, the Black Knight is represented to have imprisoned a member of the family of Staley and a daughter of a Staley in the dungeons of Ashton: the story is altogether merely a flight of fiction. The "true and faithful" relation of the origin, contained in a communication to a society at the New Inn, Ashton, is egregiously absurd. The proficiency of Sir Thomas de Assheton in the "*black*" art of alchymy has led to a supposition of his having been the original of the Black Knight.—Bell's Gazetteer states Sir Ralph Assheton to have been shot as he was riding down the principal street of the town, on one of his Easter-Monday visitations, and the inhabitants to have taken no trouble to discover the assassin.

Dr. Hibbert, now Dr. Ware, has supplied a detailed and laboured essay on the subject, full of ingenious conjectures and cogent inference; yet apparently void of instances of acts sufficiently vicious to justify such long-continued imprecation. He has discovered, in the rent-roll of Sir John de Assheton, the terms "guld rode" in connexion with "Rauf and Robyn of Assheton," who held the "guld rode;" and they are considered to imply the observance, at Ashton-under-Lyne, of the ancient Scottish custom of guld riding,* a perambulation of lords of manors, or by their representatives or officials, to examine the lands of the tenantry in search of the weed

* The custom of *guld riding* is retained at Cargill, in Perthshire, to the present day.—(Statist. Act, 15,536, 537, Rev. J. Bannerman, quoted by Dr. Hibbert.)

guld, or *gool*, and to punish, by fine, the farmers who suffered their growth. The words *guld rode* might indicate a tenement perhaps overgrown with *gool*, held by "Rauf and Robyn;" yet *rode* is to be taken to mean ride. Rauf became Sir Raphe Assheton of Middleton, and to his severe exercise of the privilege of *guld-riding*, retained for life, (in the manor of Assheton, though he was of another manor) Dr. Hibbert ascribes the rise of "Riding the Black Lad;" while the majority of writers on the matter believe Sir Raphe to have earned his ill-fame by an arbitrary act of his vice-constablenesship. He was appointed to this office in 1486, at the accession of Richard III. A copy of his commission is to be seen in Rymer's *Fœdera*.

The Sour Carr, a large extent of low wet land in the vicinity of Ashton, was overrun in the days of Sir John de Assheton with corn marigolds, the Scottish carr-gulds, which were deemed so destructive to the growth of corn that rigorous measures of manorial regulation were enforced for their extirpation. Such farmers as permitted a profusion of the carr-guld to be found on their lands suffered by fine, imprisonment in the stocks, or incarceration, on the visit of the carr-guld riders, upon a certain day in spring, supposed to have been Easter-Monday. The obnoxious black knight, Sir Raphe of Middleton, was designated the "Black Boy" from wearing black armour. In executing his duties of search after carr-gulds he appeared at Ashton annually, mounted on a charger, and attended by a numerous train of followers. The tenants of Ashton regarded his interference

as the tyrannical intrusion of a stranger. At the present day the name of the Black Boy excites feelings of horror, and tradition has indeed perpetuated the prayer which was fervently ejaculated for a deliverance from his tyranny :—

“ Sweet Jese, for thy mercy’s sake,
And for thy bitter passion ;
Save us from the axe of the Tower,
And from Sir Raphe of Assheton.”

On the death of the dreaded guld-rider, the heir and successor of Sir Thomas de Assheton (not Sir John as usually asserted) abolished the unpopular usage of guld-riding, and charged upon the estate a small sum of money to bear the costs of a yearly celebration of disapproval of the oppression of Sir Raphe. The custom is maintained at present on the memorable Easter-Monday. An effigy is made of a man in armour ; and since the arbitrary knight was the son of a second marriage, (which for this reason had been esteemed by the heir of Sir John as an unfortunate match,) the figure is now deridingly emblazoned with the initial letters of the name of the last couple that are linked together in the course of the year. The figure is then placed on horseback, and after a march through the town, followed by a coarse vulgar crowd and a throng of inquiring strangers, it is dismounted ; and all fire arms being duly primed for the occasion, the mock representation of the Black Knight is quickly destroyed.

After all the profound reasoning of Dr. Hibbert on the matter, there is yet vacancy for additional research. His conjectures are urged with apparent probability ; but it is

difficult to avoid coming to the conclusion that a more atrocious act than the extirpating of corn marigolds must have led to a practice so deeply marked with expressions of abhorrence to those whose infamy is thus perpetuated for centuries. Mr. Baines very properly observes:—“Supposing this account (Dr. Hibbert’s) to be correct, it is manifest that the offence of Sir Ralph in obliging the farmers to keep their grounds free from weeds, was not of so heinous a nature as to require to be expiated by centuries of execrations, and the solemnity might now be permitted to cease, without any detriment to the moral feeling of the place.” (Lancashire, 12mo., vol. 1, p. 494.)

The Town and Parish were, for centuries, governed solely by the officers appointed at the courts of the manor, which will be duly noticed in the account of the local government. To the west of the Old Hall stretched two Parks, amply stored with vert and venison, and on their borders stood the corn-mill of the manor, at which the tenants were bound to have their corn ground, or to suffer condign punishment. The principal ancient places within Ashton Town Division are *Ryecroft*, now a west suburb of the town, originally a farm, which was held in 1422 by Robert de Wright, the principal tenant at will of Sir John de Assheton; *Currier-Lane*, a suburb, built in the last century; *Throstle Nest*, a village half-a-mile east of the town; and *Park Hall*, a venerable house.

HISTORICAL EVENTS.—Of the state of Ashton in many reigns succeeding the erection of the Old Hall and the Church we know little, except what is related of the

Asshetons.—The place was a small village for several centuries. In the days of the spirited Queen Elizabeth, the feasts of the dedication of the churches, or the local festivals named *Wakes*, had become such irreligious affairs that it was deemed requisite to suppress the “Sunday piping, drinking, profanity, bear and bull baiting, &c.” Accordingly the Bishop of Chester and others waged an exterminating war for some time against the sabbath fiddlers and fuddlers: they did not succeed, however, in effectually abolishing wakes, for about fifty years afterwards they were revived with nearly all their ancient attractions; and, to this day, annual local festivals are yet held, partaking, in a slight degree, of the liveliness of the early English pastimes; bear and bull baiting are, however, happily uncommon; and though there is still much intemperance and profanity, there are indications of a growing taste for mental amusements.

“ Now many a humble group is seen,
By cottage hearth or village green,
With sparkling eyes and joyous looks,
All poring eager o’er their books;
While curly locks and haffets grey,
Glist in the light of mental day.”

The doctrines of the Protestants were extensively preached in this place during the reign of Mary, by John Bradford, a native of Manchester, and a zealous minister and martyr.

If this parish escaped the sequestration of the property of the royalists, in 1646, it was not exempt from

the visitation of the Bartholomew Act, by which the rector was ejected, in 1662.

During the seventeenth century, owing to a scarcity of small coin, tradesmen frequently coined pence, for the purpose of provincial circulation. Mr. Barritt has preserved a drawing of one of the trade tokens of Ashton; it is thus inscribed on the obverse :—"George Bardslay in Ashton-under-lyne," and on the reverse "G. B. E. 1669."

For nearly two centuries, the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth, the town underwent but a trifling change; in extent, the place was merely a moderate-sized village; the houses were chiefly in the immediate vicinity of the hall and church, and were principally of a rude construction, being low and thatched. The primitive methods of spinning and weaving, combined with husbandry and gardening, formed the occupations of the population, whose manners were free and jocose.

In the days of Queen Anne, many of the cottages let at two shillings each per annum, in consequence of the non-existence of large manufactories to impart a comparative high value to property. As late as the reign of George II., 1750, the whole town was contained in four narrow dark streets, formed by mean-looking dwellings.

A number of stragglers from the rebel army of 1745, visited the district, and dispossessed a few farmers of horses. A serious shock of an earthquake occurred on Sunday, the 14th of September, 1777,—the congregation

in the church were much disturbed by the shaking of the pews. The progress of the cotton manufacture, and the results produced by its establishment, form the subject of a separate article. In the latter part of the last century the cotton trade was in its infancy, and though the town was then much increased by means of commercial enterprise, the ultimate consequences arising from the extraordinary spread of trade were not fully developed until the second or third decennial periods of the present century. In the view of the town, published in Aikin's Manchester, in 1795, the appearance is partly rural and partly town-like, and there seems to have been scarcely a dwelling south of Old-street, and only two houses adjacent to Dukinfield-bridge. The buildings and streets increased rapidly from 1810 to 1824; yet in the latter year, the houses to the west of Mill-lane were few; the banks of the canal and the Tame were almost destitute of dwellings and mills; the space from Old-street to Charlestown consisted principally of gardens, intersected by a foot-path; west of Oldham-road there was not one street; and north of the Old Cross stretched an expanse of fields to Hurst.

During the last fifteen years the place has rapidly augmented, so that Mill-lane is nearly become the centre of the town; the banks of the canal and the Tame are now lined by numerous streets; the area betwixt Old-street and Charlestown is nearly all built upon, and a portion of it forms a spacious Market-place, on the north side of which is erected an elegant and large Town Hall; the fields formerly bordering on the north of the Old

Cross have been transformed into street avenues; the east side of the Rectory has received a large accession of habitations; the west side of Oldham-road is become a portion of the town; and the vicinities of Henry-square and St. Peter's Church abound with new edifices.

When the era of building set in with spirit, a praise-worthy care was invariably manifested to secure regularity in the plans of the erections; and hence, by continued uniformity being preserved in the construction of the streets, Ashton-under-Lyne has been rendered the most elegant ordinary town in the county. The beneficial system of education pursued in Sunday Schools was first introduced here in 1790.

In the course of the afternoon of a dismal day in January, 1791, the place was visited by an awful thunder storm; a vast accumulation of electric matter seemed to collect over the town, and between five and six in the evening, the clouds burst with a tremendous explosion, which occasioned an involuntary exclamation of horror through the place. Lightning struck the church steeple, and melted a part of the vane: a number of stones were thrown from the belfry, where an iron rod was fused by the fluid, and many pews in the west end of the church and in the Earl of Stamford's chapel were shivered to atoms.

The threats of an invasion of England by the French in 1803, put the whole country in military array,—the volunteer system now became general,—and the patriotic

flame burning with much vigour in the hearts of the Ashtonians, the Ashton volunteers were embodied with no slight degree of formality and tact; and John Wood, Esq., of the Old Hall, one of the principal cotton manufacturers, was appointed commander. This formidable body of men were, fortunately for the peace of the country, unengaged in any exploits of national strife, doubtless much to the regret of such a "valorous and puissant legion," many of whom professed eagerness to be hailed as deliverers of their country.

"A memorable phenomenon, at once terrific and sublime, occurred in the district between the Medlock and the Tame on Thursday, June 19th, 1817:—at four o'clock on the afternoon of that day, an unusual darkness came on, and prevailed about twenty minutes, during which period, successive flashes of lightning served to render the 'darkness visible,' and hailstones fell, or rather irregular prisms of ice, of from four to six inches in diameter. The storm swept along the plain from Hartshead, by Mossley and Hazlehurst, and terminated with the parish of Ashton, to the west of Stalybridge. The wind was from the north-west, and the glass in every window bearing that aspect in the whole range of that part of the parish was demolished, though no other very material mischief was done." (Baines, Vol. 1, 12mo., p. 494.) A destructive fire broke out in the Parish Church on the 30th of March, 1821.—(See article Church.)—The coronations of George IV., William IV., and Victoria, were commemorated here by splendid public entertainments.

Shortly after Whit-Monday, 1827, the town was first lighted by means of that useful and important modern discovery, coal gas.

In 1832 the legislature effected an extensive change in the representation of the people, by granting members to the principal unrepresented towns: by this measure Ashton-under-Lyne was constituted a parliamentary borough.—(See article Representation.)—A most afflictive event occurred on Sunday evening, the 6th January, 1833: six boys were thoughtlessly at play together upon the ice of a pit at the top of Cricket's-lane, which, being but slightly frozen, gave way, and all the juvenile company were immersed in a watery grave; a middle-aged man was also drowned in attempting to rescue the boys.

As in all thoroughly manufacturing districts, where immense numbers of the diligent operatives are employed by a few enterprising capitalists, lamentable disputes have prevailed here on the subject of the rate of wages: thus in 1829 thousands of hands were unemployed for a considerable period, owing to the want of an amicable feeling betwixt the employers and the employed; whilst some of the masters, it is probable, have been largely influenced by the desire of gain, the operatives have been generally indifferent to their own individual welfare. A large number of the factory operatives are intelligent, energetic, and active; but the great mass are of coarse and low habits.

The town of Ashton-under-Lyne is even now in

course of considerable extension and improvement, and yet the manufacturers complain of depression of trade ; still there are decided indications that the place is to increase materially.

The PARISH CHURCH was originally a chapel of ease to the Parish Church of Manchester. When it was first founded is unknown ; but mention is made of "ecclesia Aston" in the return of livings taken by order of Pope Nicholas IV., in 1291. In a deed relative to the advowson dated in 1304, this church is termed the Chapel of Ashton,—the patronage was then in the lords of Manchester. The patronage did not become vested in the Asshetons until 1427 ; and probably the church was rendered parochial about that period. During the life-time of Sir Thomas Assheton, who died in 1516, the church was greatly repaired and enlarged, and a new tower erected. For several generations there were no changes in the structure ; but in 1791, many of the pews having been seriously damaged by a storm, the body of the church was re-pewed in 1792, at the cost of the seat holders, and the roof was painted and plastered at the expense of the parish. The present handsome tower was erected in 1820, and the whole of the north side of the church was rebuilt in 1821. Whilst these improvements were in progress an alarming fire broke out, in the interior part, on the evening of Saturday, the 30th March, 1821, owing to one of the flues under the west gallery being overheated. The flames spread their destructive ravages to all the timber around the place where they originated, and before they could be suppressed the valuable fine-

toned organ was completely consumed, and several antique carvings shared the same fate. Though the north side of the church and the tower were both rebuilt, and the body of the edifice restored to its usual condition, the south side remained in its ancient decayed state until the year 1840; when, owing to the liberality of the patron of the rectory and lord of the manor, that portion was rebuilt, in a style corresponding with the rest. The first stone was laid May 18th, 1840, by N. Howard, Esq. The ancient porch, a pleasing specimen of early ecclesiastical architecture, has been duly restored. The tower was slightly burnt by accident March 21st, 1841.

This Church is dedicated to St. Michael. The living is a rectory, of which the annual value in 1291, according to Pope Nicholas's valuation, was fifteen marks, or £10; the yearly value in the king's books of the reign of Henry VIII., was £26 13s. 4d., tenths, £2 13s. 4d. ;* its estimated annual value in the recent parliament returns, 1833, is £1409. The tithes have been commuted for fixed rates, in pursuance of a recent act of parliament, passed 1831. The Grelles, as lords of Manchester, are the earliest patrons of the advowson on record; but, in 1304, William de Marchia, parson of Manchester, usurped the patronage, in place of Thomas Grelle. The De la Warres were subsequently patrons by right of relationship to the Grelles.

In 1427, "Magister" Thomas de la Warre, Baron

* The Parliamentary Inquisition of 1650, states the value at £113 6s. 8d.

and Rector of Manchester, conveyed the advowson and glebe of the church of "Assheton" to Sir John de "Asshetown." (Harleian MSS., codex 2085, fo. 410.)—The descendants of Sir John Assheton have retained the patronage, with a few exceptions; and it is at present vested in the Earl of Stamford and Warrington.

According to a deed without date, but apparently relating to the thirteenth century, *Simon de Cranesley*, clerk, was parson of Ashton, on the presentation of the Lord of Manchester.

It is probable that Simon Cranesley was succeeded in the rectory by *John Huntington*, or Huntingdon, B.D., who was the first Warden of Manchester, instituted 1422. Hollingworth, the historian of Manchester, thus describes the first warden:—"a man learned in the learning of those times, very devout and *magnificent*; hee built the chancel or quire, (Manchester) in the midst whereof and just before the high altar, as then it stood, he lies buried, with the suitable inscription, 'Domini, dilexi decorem domus tuæ.' His rebus or name-devyse, (device—a custome borrowed from the French) is to bee seene on either syde of the middle arch, as it looketh eastward: on the syde is an huntsman with dogges, whereby hee thought to expresse two former sillables of his name,—Hunting; on the other syde, a vessell called a tonne, which being joined together makes Huntington."*

* Hollingworth's *Mancuniensis*, Willis's edition, p. 43-44.—Camden's *Remains*.—Baines, 4to., vol. 2, p. 196-7—Aston's *Manchester*, p. 34.

This eminent ecclesiastic held his dignified station thirty-seven years, and died November 11, 1458.

From 1458 to 1554 there are no records extant as to the rectors. In 1554, on the 20th August, *William Rogerson* was instituted rector, on the presentation of Thomas Stanley, Knt. This divine retained the living only a short period; for on the 12th June, 1557, *Hugo Griff*, Doctor in Divinity, was appointed the clergyman, by the gift of King Philip and Queen Mary. Another defect in the list of rectors ensues, from the time of Dr. Griff to the beginning of the seventeenth century, when *Robert Parker*, A. M., occurs as rector. The first notice of him is in 1608. He died February, 1618, and was succeeded by *Henry Fairfax*, D. D., son of Lord Cameron. This incumbent is stated, by Herbert,* to have been a regular and sober man, well affected to God and the king." He seems to have been much attached to episcopacy, and hence incurred the dislike of the Presbyterian party, then the most powerful body in the state. Notwithstanding the great influence of his brother and nephew with the then rulers, he was obliged to surrender the rectory in 1650, and fled to Bolton Percy, in Yorkshire.† He is said to have been a prebend of York. He died April 6th, 1665, aged 77.—*John Harrison* was inducted rector, by a party of soldiers, according to the manner of the times (1650), for a fierce spiritual warfare was raging betwixt the Episcopalians and Presbyterians. Walker asserts that Harrison rifled Dr.

* Country Parson. † Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy.

Fairfaxes books and papers ; but the statements of writers tinged with partisanship must be cautiously received. The ecclesiastical commissioners of the commonwealth, who were by no means admirers of episcopacy, pronounce Harrison to have been “a painful (pains-taking) able minister ;” and state that he “was put in by the parliament.” These commissioners urgently recommended a division of parishes, for the purpose of rendering the clergy comparatively equal, in labour as well as income ; They therefore proposed in their report, dated July 18, 1650,† “that a Parish Church be built at Alt-Edge, distant about three miles and a half from the Parish Church of Ashton.” This project was not carried into effect, and Alt-Edge still remains destitute of either church or chapel, although there has been a vast increase of population since that period.—Mr. Harrison possessed the rectory till the 24th of August, 1662, when he was obliged, by act of parliament, to conform to the doctrines of the Church of England, or resign. He made choice of the latter, and consequently ceased to be incumbent : it was at this time that not only the Presbyterians but the Independents had become considerable in numbers. It is doubtful who was Harrison’s successor ; but *Thomas Ellison* was rector in the latter part of the seventeenth century : he is commemorated by a tablet in the church, and died 1700.—The next incumbent was *John de la Heuze*, or de la Howe, who was instituted May 3rd, 1700 : he died January 15th, 1726 ; and was followed by

† Parliamentary Surveys of Church Lands, Lambeth Library, No. 912, fo. 260.

John Penny, A.M., who was collated March 3rd, 1726, and is recorded on a monument to have died July 9th, 1758.—His successor was the *Rev. Sir George Booth*, Bart., presented September 9th, 1758, a cousin of Lord Delamere, on whose death he became a baronet January 9th, 1770. Sir George expired in 1797; and the succeeding rector was *Oswald Leicester*, A.M., who was inducted December 1, 1797; but resigned shortly afterwards, for the *Hon. Anchitel Grey*, A.M., third son of the fifth Earl of Stamford, was instituted to the living April 5th, 1799. He resigned the incumbency in March, 1810; and his successor was *John Hutchinson*, B.A., appointed May 7th, 1810, who resigned January 24th, 1816; and was succeeded by *George Chetwode*, A.M., the present rector, the date of whose induction is May 16, 1816. This reverend gentleman was chaplain to his late Majesty, William IV., when Duke of Clarence, and is nephew of the present Earl of Stamford.—The Rev. Jonathan Craddock, who became curate of the Parish Church in 1758, was locally eminent for his promotion of topographical studies.—The Rev John Handforth is the present curate of this church.—The Rectory-House is a modern edifice, a short distance to the east of the parochial pile.

The registers of baptisms and marriages commence in 1594, and those of burials in 1596; but the numerical results of the bills of mortality, as indicative of the state of population, are treated of in another article. During the period of the commonwealth marriages were solemnized here by the magistrates, John Gwilym and Edmund Hopwood, Esqrs.

The Church, considered entire, is spacious and well built; the north side, though but a recent re-erection, appears weather-beaten; the south portion is a very late restoration; and the tower is a handsome lofty fabric, of modern date. The style of the architecture is decorative gothic, of which the porch presents an excellent example.

A triangular shield was carved on the north side of the ancient tower, charged with a mullet, the arms of Ashton, impaling the arms of Staley of Staley, respecting whom Dr. Aikin says a popular tale was current, probably a terrific legend of some act of feudal character. The nature of the tradition seems, however, to be lost. The arms on the steeple evidently alluded to the union of the families of Ashton and Staley.—The interior of the church formerly bore strong “marks testimonial of its antiquity,” and was ornamented by—

“The high *embowed* roof,
With antique pillars’ massy proof.”

The present appearance of the interior is by no means agreeable; the stately columns and the springing arches, the carved timbers and the numerous pews, are in a rude condition, and require considerable improvement. There is said to be an intention to renovate the whole interior, in the perpendicular gothic style, from designs of Mr. Tattersall.

The east window, which is large, contains many fragments of stained glass; but they are so much mutilated as to be nearly illegible,—the subjects of representation seem to be scriptural. A portion of the pulpit is decorated

by ancient carving. There were formerly several singular figures under the seats of the pews; and one of those relics of Catholic faith, a Rood gallery, or place for the celebration of the rites of the cross, existed in the nave, but was removed in 1792.

The monumental memorials of this place are numerous, but not extraordinary. In the church-yard, a short distance from the north side of the tower, is a tomb, bearing the subjoined inscription:—

“Here resteth the body of John Leach, of Hurst, buried the 16th day of October, 1689, aged 92 years, who, by Ann his wife, had issue twelve children; and, in his time, was father to twelve, grandfather to seventy-five, great-grandfather to ninety-two, great-great-grandfather to two, in all one hundred and eighty-one persons.”

Upon the tomb there has been sculptured the arms of the Leach family; on the top there are traces of the figure of a serpent, which tradition says he kept tame in his house; and beneath is inscribed the motto “*Virtus est venerabilis.*” We are not informed what kind of serpent this pet of the aged Leach was; but probably its nature was innoxious. A descendant of the sire, Mr. Joseph Leach, who was resident at Hurst-Cross in 1833, preserved the board whereon the serpent is said to have fed and reposed.

In the interior of the church is a neat mural slab, thus inscribed:—

“To the memory of John Brown, lieutenant in the 44th regiment, who fell on the 13th of March, 1801, in his 20th year, in an attack made by his Majesty’s forces on the fortified heights before Alexandria, in Egypt.

Reader, this monument records, descriptive of his worth,
his dying words:—

When on Aboukir's blood-stain'd shore,
He heard undaunted the loud cannon's roar ;
And marching boldly onward met the ball,
The fatal cause of his lamented fall :
He said, ' If this be death I feel no pain,
Happy I die.' Such hope of heavenly gain,—
Religion, loyalty, and courage tried,
Afforded him, who for his country died."

A small tablet, on the north side of the interior, commemorates John Posethwaite, whom it records to "have sustained the highest honours of masonry without pride:" he died February 2nd, 1818, aged 70 years, "preserved from indigence by the bounty of his friends." Several ordinary monuments are in memory of the Rev. Thomas Ellison, died 1700; Rev. John Penny, died 1758; George Mower, gent., died 1758; Joshua Oldham, gent., died 1785; John Wych, gent., died 1806; John Lees, gent., died 1812; and Samuel Swire, son of Samuel Swire, gent., died 1786, and others of that family. In the church-yard are inscriptions recording the Rev. Jonathan Catlow, who was curate here twenty-one years, died June 1st, 1746; and William Barlow, Esq., lieutenant-colonel in the 12th foot, who died October 25th, 1790, aged 81.

An excellent peal of ten bells, placed in the lofty tower of the Parish Church, affords to the ringers a favourable opportunity for becoming clever in ringing; hence Ashton is famous for steeple music.

For several centuries St. Michael's was the only episcopal church in Ashton; but, owing to the great increase of population, the parochial pile has been considered, for many years, insufficient to accommodate the inhabitants; accordingly, in 1821, subscriptions were entered into for the purpose of erecting a new church; a liberal grant being procured from the parliamentary commissioners for the erection of additional churches, and a site comprising 15,680 square yards having been presented by Lord Stamford, the first stone of ST. PETER'S, or *The New Church*, was laid October 24th, 1821, by the Right Rev. George Henry Law, the Lord Bishop of Chester. This episcopal church was consecrated December 12th, 1824. Its situation is adjacent to Stamford-place, near the western extremity of the town. The living is a perpetual curacy, endowed by seat-rents, surplice fees, &c. The annual value, as returned in 1833, was £137. Patron, the Rector of Ashton. The structure is a rich specimen of the decorative gothic style; the architect was the celebrated Francis Goodwin, Esq., of London. The body of the building, as well as the tower, is highly decorated, and in the eastern wall is a spacious rose window. This pleasing edifice forms an appropriate termination to that elegant avenue, Stamford-street. The sum of £14,000 was appropriated to the erection, which is calculated to hold 1800 persons, and 1390 of the sittings out of that number are free, and appropriated to the use of the poor. The area of the church is 142 by 65 feet, and the height of the tower is 128 feet. The first and present incumbent is the Rev. John Hutchinson, A.M., for many years the respected rector of the parish.

The *Catholics* possessed a meeting-room in Ashton in 1823, in Harrop's-yard, a narrow passage near the Market Cross, where they assembled for worship till November, 1825; when the Catholic Chapel, in Astley-street, Dukinfield, being completed, the congregation removed thither; and that is now become the only church of the society for the town of Ashton and the village of Dukinfield.

The *Independents* have existed here, in a small degree, since the secession of the sect from the English Presbyterians, in the seventeenth century; but they were destitute of a regular place of worship until a recent period. In 1795-6 attempts were made to establish a society, but these efforts failed. In 1806, however, a chapel of the sect was erected, in Dukinfield, and named "Providence;" but this appearing to many an unwise proceeding, a meeting-room was opened in the town of Ashton in 1815. By further exertions a chapel was built, near Cricket's-lane, and was opened April 9th, 1817. In a few years afterwards (1820) Providence Chapel became connected with the Secession Church of Scotland; and the Independents of Ashton having comparatively increased in numbers and in wealth, the chapel of 1817, calculated to accommodate 500 persons, became too small, and was superseded by the present spacious and striking edifice, which was erected in 1838, and contains seats for 1000 persons. Its cost was £4000.

The *Wesleyan Methodists* were established in Ashton prior to 1781, from which time to 1804, they had a

chapel in Harrop's-yard. In 1804 the chapel in Stamford-street was erected ; and in 1815 it was enlarged and considerably improved.

The *New Connexion Methodists* are a large body, and have flourished in this district for many years. The spacious and neat chapel of this society is in Stamford-street, and was originally commenced in 1799. The edifice has received several decorations of late years.

The *Independent Methodists* began to assemble for worship in Ashton about 1818-19. In 1823 they had a meeting-room in New, or Stamford-street ; but in 1838 the present chapel in Wellington-road, Charlestown, was erected.

The *Primitive Methodists* prevailed in this town prior to 1823, and have still a meeting-room.

The *Baptists* have a small place of worship in Oldham-road, of recent date.

The *Stephensites* originated in the secession of the Rev. J. R. Stephens from the Wesleyan Methodists. The admirers of this singularly distinguished personage erected, in 1837, a large but plain building for worship, in Charlestown, which is calculated to accommodate 1100 persons.

The *Israelites*, commonly called *Johannites*, from their belief in the doctrines of Johanna Southcote, had

become so numerous here in 1823 that they had a room in Charlestown. In 1825 they erected a commodious and well-finished chapel in Church-street, which was opened on Christmas-Day, in that year. This sect were once considerable in extent. The peculiarity of their opinions, and the oddity of their appearance, imparted an extraordinary notoriety to the society. At each of the four cardinal points of the outskirts of the town they erected a species of temple, called, in the shibboleth of the sect, "The Northern," "The Southern," "The Eastern," and "The Western" Gates of the Temple of the Children of Israel. These edifices are no longer either inhabited by the high priests or the low priests of the Israelitish fraternity, having passed out of the hands of the body, who were in a flourishing condition from 1825 to 1833-5.

The *Local Government* of the town and parish was, for several centuries, vested entirely in the officers appointed by the court leet for the manor, held in October, yearly; and these officers consisting of a Mayor, Constables, Assistant Constables, Bye-law Men, Market Lookers, and minor officials, are still chosen at the court leet, and exercise authority over the manor.—Owing to the election of a functionary, named a Mayor, the place has been erroneously regarded as a corporate borough.—Dr. Aikin remarks: "It appears, from a very ancient manuscript in the possession of Joseph Pickford, Esq., of Royton, containing the rent-roll and several very curious particulars concerning the estate, drawn at a remote period, to have been a borough; but why the

charter was withdrawn, or by what means the privilege was lost, there is no account: yet the custom of yearly nomination, and the insignia of office, are still kept up by the inhabitants.”* On this passage Mr. Baines observes: “We have sought in vain for the charter of incorporation of this borough; nor do we find, in any of the ancient documents quoted or referred to in this work, that it was ever so designated.”†—The office of Mayor was maintained till the conclusion of the last century, when it fell into disuse; but in 1831 a number of the principal inhabitants foreseeing that they would shortly be empowered to elect a parliamentary representative, and conceiving that the Mayor ought to be the returning officer at parliamentary elections, the appointment of this local dignitary was resumed.

The powers of the court leet and its officers were fully adequate for the efficient government of the district so long as the place was a mere village; but they proved defective for the purposes of the executive when Ashton had become a large manufacturing town: therefore, the want of something beyond ordinary police was felt,—extended means of street regulation and improvement were obviously necessary. A bill was, accordingly, introduced into the House of Commons, in the early part of 1827, for the purpose of “lighting, cleansing, watching, &c. the town; for regulating the market, and building a new market-place; and for regulating the police thereof.” This measure was strenuously opposed

* Aikin's *Manchester*, 4to., p. 224.

† Baines's *Lancashire*, 4to., vol. 2, p. 553.

by three public meetings of the inhabitants, as unnecessary and burthensome ; but, as Mr. Harrison, the counsel for the opponents, justly observed, such a bill would, probably, at some future time, be of advantage to the place ; it is clear the magnitude of the town rendered some police provisions needful. The bill received the royal assent June 14th, 1827, 7th and 8th George IV., and its powers are vested in certain rated inhabitants, named Commissioners, by whom police rates are levied. The jurisdiction of the act extends over the district called Ashton Town Division, which comprehends the town and its immediate vicinity : the number of Commissioners is necessarily variable. They appoint salaried constables, as a deputy and two or three others, who are usually appointed constables by the court leet also. The cost of the police and watching establishment in the year ending June 24th, 1840, was £715 1s. 2d. The town is lighted by contract with the Gas Company. The cleansing of the streets and highways, the regulation of the market, and the management of the fire engines, are directed by the Commissioners, who use the arms of Ashton for their corporate seal. The rural parts of the parish are governed by the County Police, introduced 1840.* The Magistrates of the district hold a weekly Petit Sessions in the Manor Court-room, or Old Town Hall, on Wednesdays. The number of gentlemen in the commission of the peace in this locality is comparatively large, probably owing to the frequency of crime. The present Magistrates, and the dates of their qualifications, are,—the Rev. Joseph Saville Roberts Evans, clerk, Woodfield, Stalybridge,

* Which cost the district, in that year, £411 6s. 7d.

January 10th, 1831; James Jowett, Esq., Stamford-place, Ashton Town, January 12th, 1835; Ralph Ousey, Esq., Heyrod, Stalybridge, January 12th, 1835; David Harrison, Esq., Cross-House, Stalybridge, January 12th, 1835; Charles Hindley, Esq., M.P., Dukinfield-Lodge, January 11th, 1836; John Cheetham, Esq., Stalybridge, January 11th, 1836; Abel Buckley, Esq., Ryecroft, Ashton Town, February 26th, 1838; William Wright, Esq., Welbeck-House, Ashton Town, April 15th, 1839; James Lord, Esq., Park-parade, Ashton Town, April 15th, 1839; John Grimshaw, Esq., Audenshaw-Lodge, Audenshaw, October 26th, 1840; Jonah Harrop, Esq., Bardsley-House, Knott-Lanes, October 26th, 1840; and John Buckley, Esq., Mossley, July, 1841.

Ashton-under-Lyne and the adjoining townships of Droylsden, Denton, and Haughton, were rendered a magisterial division of the county March 1st, 1839.

A Court of Requests, for the recovery of debts not exceeding £5, within the Parish of Ashton, and the adjoining townships of Stayley, Dukinfield, Newton, Matley, and Hattersley, was established by an act of parliament, which received the royal assent June 3rd, 1808. This Court is held every Thursday fortnight, in the Manor Court-room, Ashton, before such of the Commissioners of the court as are in attendance. No. of suits in 1837, 1898.

An extraordinary impulse in favour of a change of the representative system in the House of Commons, took possession of the public mind in 1831; and one of the

principal purposes sought to be accomplished by this change was, to confer on large towns the right of representation in the legislature, hence on the 3rd of February, 1831, a number of inhabitants petitioned for members : but in the first plan of the Reform Bill, introduced in the Commons March 1st, 1831, Ashton-under-Lyne was not included in the list of intended parliamentary boroughs. This omission was felt by many of the inhabitants as a serious defect ; and a public meeting was consequently held April 22nd, 1831, to institute proceedings for securing a member or members for the Town or for the Parish. Messrs. John J. Southam, William Nicholson, and John Campbell, M. D., were appointed a deputation to take measures for obtaining the insertion of Ashton in the Reform Bill. The inclusion of the place in the modern *Magna Charta* was, however, not very readily obtained ; in consequence, it was rumoured, of a fear on the part of the framers, to add to the interests of Lord Stamford, and partly owing to endeavours to have the whole Parish, including Stalybridge, enfranchised. About June, 1831, the proceedings for obtaining a legislative representation of the district were renewed ; and Messrs. Charles Hindley and John Campbell, M. D., were chosen by a subsequent public meeting, to urge the claims of Ashton to parliamentary notice. On the 13th September, 1831, Ashton was promised a representative ; but the proposal that Stalybridge should form a portion of the borough seems to have been coolly received by the leading classes of that place. The idea that Stalybridge ought to be a part of a borough, to bear the name of Ashton *only*, did not square with their views of politic rank ;

and, therefore, the project was unsuccessful. During the sitting of the Committee of the House of Lords on the Reform Bill, May 22nd, 1832, when a motion was made that Ashton-under-Lyne be placed in Schedule D, Lord Ellenborough observed,—“that this town had not appeared in the first, nor yet in the second Reform Bill that had been brought before parliament. The town of Stalybridge was unwilling to have anything to do with the franchise in conjunction with Ashton, and Ashton had the same disinclination to be united in electing representatives with Stalybridge.” The Lord Chancellor said, “that Ashton-under-Lyne was an important town, containing a population of 14,000 or 15,000 inhabitants, which was a sufficient reason for giving it representatives. It was the fact that Stalybridge, though it wished representation for itself, yet objected to have the franchise in conjunction with Ashton; and there was no love lost—(a laugh),—for Ashton had an equal objection to be united with Stalybridge. This was unfortunate; but, as was the case sometimes with women, the closeness of affection was not in proportion to the proximity of situation.—(a laugh.) This dislike on both sides was, however, a complete justification for not coupling together two reluctant communities. He would just give one instance of the extent to which this dislike went. An act was passed, some time ago, for the purpose of paving and lighting Ashton and the places adjacent; but a positive exception was introduced into the bill, excluding Stalybridge from the operation.” The Committee agreed that Ashton-under-Lyne should stand part of the schedule D, thus granting one member to the place.

The Reform Bill eventually received the royal assent June 7th, 1832; and, according to its provisions, every occupier of certain premises of the yearly value of £10 is constituted an elector.—The Boundary Act, passed July 11th, 1832, directs that the borough shall extend over the whole space of district which is regulated by the provisions of an act passed in the 7th and 8th Geo. IV., usually entitled the Police Act. The Mayor, whose office has been recently revived, is rendered Returning Officer, pursuant to the wording of schedule D. Long before there was a probability of an early election, the electors of Ashton were amply engaged in considering the claims of the candidates that were presented for parliamentary honours. The Radical party invited George Williams, Esq., of Little Woolton, near Liverpool, once a colonel in the army, and at present a magistrate of the county, to become an aspirant for legislatorial rank. He did so on condition that he was elected without incurring a personal canvass: such event ultimately occurred.—The Liberal Whigs introduced as their candidate, Chas. Hindley, Esq., of Dukinfield, master cotton-spinner and manufacturer, a talented advocate of free trade; and he was extensively supported. — The Conservative party were not slow to avail themselves of whatever advantages they could derive from position and influence; and, accordingly, Thomas Williams Helps, Esq., of London, barrister, the son of a highly respectable merchant, of London, who was formerly a manufacturer of Ashton, was proposed as the Tory candidate, and received large promises of support.

On Monday, the 12th November, 1832, the first Court for the revision of the lists of electors for the borough, was held in the Court-house, before H. Lawrence, Esq., Revising Barrister. The number of electors qualified to vote amounted, after revision, to 420. The parliamentary returns of 1832, relative to the population and constituencies of the boroughs, contain the subjoined entries : — “ Ashton : population, 14,673 ; qualifying tenements, or £10 houses, 610 ; registered electors, 450 ; assessed taxes, per annum, £1400 ; houses, 2900.” — On Wednesday, the 12th of December, 1832, the first parliamentary election took place, and was held in the Market-square. The proceedings commenced shortly after nine o'clock, by Mr. Swire moving the nomination of Charles Hindley, Esq., which was seconded by Mr. Raynor. Mr. Wright proposed George Williams, Esq., who was supported by Mr. John Harrop, sen. ; and Mr. Jowett nominated Thomas W. Helps, Esq., who was seconded by Mr. James Heginbottom. Messrs. Hindley and Helps, and Mr. John Smith on behalf of Mr. Williams, delivered effective speeches, explanatory of their respective political views. On a show of hands, a vast majority appeared for Colonel Williams. The other candidates, consequently, demanded a poll, which commenced on Thursday morning, and terminated near noon on Friday, December 13th and 14th. On Thursday, an electioneering mob committed serious disorder, by injuries to persons, and also to property. The numbers at the close of the poll were,—Williams, 176 ; Hindley, 156 ; and Helps, 44 ; so that 376 voters exercised their suffrage. George Williams, Esq., was duly elected,

and sat in the first Reformed House of Commons as Member for Ashton.

The second Election for Ashton-under-Lyne occurred January 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1835, when the numbers at the close of the poll being,—Hindley, 212; Helps, 105; Williams, 63; or 380 polled votes,—Charles Hindley, Esq., of Dukinfield, one of the candidates at the first election, was returned as the representative of the borough.

The third Election took place July 26 and 27, 1837, when a rather severe contest ensued betwixt Charles Hindley, Esq., and James Wood, Esq., of Manchester; the latter a Conservative. The results of the poll were,—Hindley, 237; Wood, 201; Stephens, 19; total voters, 457. Charles Hindley, Esq., was duly elected as member for the borough.

The fourth Parliamentary Election for Ashton occurred on the 30th of June and 1st of July, 1841; and was characterized by extremely riotous proceedings, which were almost equally injurious to persons as well as to property, owing to the reckless conduct of a body of railway workmen, apparently introduced by those professed supporters of order—the Conservatives. There were two candidates, Charles Hindley, Esq., the old member, and Jonah Harrop, Esq., of Bardsley-House, who stood on the Tory interest. The numbers at the close of the poll were,—Hindley, 303; Harrop, 254; so that the former was returned by a large majority.—In periods of excitement, party feeling runs sufficiently

high in this place; but the prevalent tone of opinion of the elective body is in favour of a system of legislation that will be amply protective of commercial interests.

The gentlemen who, as Mayors of Ashton-under-Lyne, have acted as returning officers at elections since 1831, merit notice. The subjoined is a list of them from that period:—1832, John Wood, Esq.; 1833, Nathaniel Howard, Esq.; 1834, James Jowett, Esq.; 1835, Thos. Smith, Esq.; 1836, Samuel Earnshaw, Esq.; 1837, the same; 1838, Joseph Oldham, Esq.; 1839, Samuel Heginbottom, Esq.; 1840, Samuel Swire, Esq.

Ashton received a grant of a *Market* as early as 1284, 12th Edward I. (Keurden.)—This grant was renewed by letters patent, bearing date February 13th, 1413, 14th Henry VI., procured by Sir John de Assheton. The privilege was again confirmed November 24th, 1608, by James I., on the application of George Booth, Esq. The original market was held on Mondays, pursuant to the charter; but Aikin remarks, in 1795,—"there was formerly a market held here every Wednesday, at a place where an ancient cross is still standing; it has been discontinued above thirty years ago, (1762) though such a convenience is now particularly wanted, from the rapidly increased population." Although the town was rapidly increasing in the first quarter of the present century, the Market seems not to have been fully re-established till a few years ago; for in 1825, Mr. Baines observes:—that "it is not difficult to foresee that this market will be again brought into requisition at no distant day." The essential

wants of so populous a place rendered the holding of a market indispensable; and accordingly, in 1827-8, a sort of market was commenced in the streets, on Saturday evenings. The formation of a new market was projected, and the powers of the Police Act, enabling the Commissioners of Police to provide such a place of public accommodation, operations for the construction of a square and erection of covered stalls, were commenced in 1828, the Earl of Stamford having given a site extending over 14,000 yards, and likewise surrendered his interest in the rents of several houses adjoining the proposed Market. In March, 1829, the building of the butchers' stalls was commenced, in the centre of the new area, which extends from Old-street to Stile-barn.

This spacious square of weekly traffic was opened, with much ceremony, on Saturday, July 2nd, 1830. The butchers' stalls form a large brick edifice, surrounding a flagged opening. The number of shops is 26, at rents varying from £10 to £13 per annum each. Four-and-a-half per cent. of the gross produce of the tolls is claimed by the lord of the manor; the remainder is received by the Commissioners of Police. The principal market-day is Saturday: Markets are also held on Mondays and Wednesdays. The ancient Market Cross was taken down in 1829.

The grant of 1284 conferred two *Fairs* on the place, and the letters patent of 1413 confirm the grant, and further direct that they shall be held yearly, one on the Eve. the Feast, and the Morrow, of St. Swithin, (July

14, 15, 16) and the other on the Eve, the Feast, and the Morrow, of St. Martyne, (November 9, 10, 11.) The present Fairs are held March 23rd, April 29th, July 25th, Nov. 21st, and a Cattle Fair on the second Thursday in every month.—The tolls of the markets and fairs produce a net income of about £500 annually.

The principal employment of the inhabitants is in cotton-spinning, weaving, and other branches of the *Cotton manufacture*. Little more than a century ago, the cotton trade was scarcely noticed as a business of interest; and its development, whilst almost unaided by machinery, was extremely slow. The one-spindled apparatus and the rude hand-loom were, for very many years, the chief instruments of operation in this now extraordinary system of commerce. The genius of Hargreaves, however, sought means to extend the trade, by partly substituting methods of art for the strength of human labour; and he was successful. Instead of a small creaky ill-contrived apparatus for spinning, a large well-organised and admirable machine was formed, and brought into general use. Arkwright planned many singularly useful improvements, and nearly matured the factory system. Watt rendered the steam-engine nobly adapted to carry out, fully, the details of that system. Crompton contributed materially to the effectiveness of the machinery. Cartwright almost accomplished the utmost purposes of art in this manufacture, by the production of the power-loom. But Roberts, on the other hand, has added another triumph to science, as well as another thrust at human labour, by substituting, in spinning, machine motion for man motion.

In 1750, the villagers of Ashton were busily engaged in humble methods of spinning and weaving, both of which were carried on in the cottages. In 1769, the weaving of light cottons was considerable. A gradual extension in the sizes of spinning, carding, and other machines, rendered large rooms necessary for these several operations; and hence, whilst small apartments were allotted to looms, spacious chambers or ample attic stories were provided for spinning, &c. : thus the concentration of machines and of hands was becoming usual, and factories or mills of a primitive sort were being formed. Considerable quantities of twist, and also warps, were largely manufactured, and chiefly used in the weaving of velverets, cotton thicksets, and other goods. The spinning machine of Arkwright became prevalent here about 1785; but for several years the spinning concerns were on a small scale, and weaving was effected in cottages. The introduction of the improved steam-engine, in 1790, gave a vast impetus to the trade; numbers of spinning, carding, and other machines, were shortly after set to work in buildings of moderate size, and all the processes, except weaving, became placed under the control of systematic mechanism. The popular dislike of improved machinery manifested itself in this district comparatively early; for in 1776, the doors of the mill of Mr. Hall, of Stalybridge, were obliged to be locked night and day, to prevent the populace from breaking in.—The mineral treasures of the country, combined with the good supply of water, tended materially to promote the establishment of manufactories.

In 1794, the town of Ashton contained about ten spinning rooms, or small factories; in 1814, nine cotton-mills, of moderate size, not including small twining and other rooms; in 1818, fourteen; in 1825, twenty-two; in 1831, twenty-seven; in 1834, thirty; in 1839, about thirty-three.—In 1825, the entire number of steam-engines in the town and vicinity, engaged in cotton manufactories, machine works, and mines, was 34, of the power of 840 horses; in 1831, their number was 45, of the power of 900 horses.—In 1794, the total of cotton-mill workers in the town was upwards of 900; and the amount of capital invested in the trade is said to have been not more than £6000. The present number of cotton-mill hands in the town is about 7000; and the amount of capital invested, is estimated at £600,000.

There were about 300 power looms here in 1818.—Of the 1740 families in the town in 1821, 1680 were engaged in trade; and of the 2823 families in the same space in 1831, 2784 were employed in trade. In 1794, the Parish of Ashton, including the town of Ashton and part of the town of Stalybridge, contained twenty small spinning concerns; in 1814, sixteen factories, of moderate size, exclusive of small rooms; in 1818, thirty; 1825, forty; 1831, fifty-one; 1839, about fifty-eight. In 1825, the steam-engines in the parish were fifty-eight, of which forty-six were engrossed by cotton-mills; in 1831, their number was 81, (of the power of 1474 horses) of which fifty-three were engaged in the cotton trade, seventeen in collieries, four in machine works, three in calico printing,

and one each in silk and woollen-mills, in tile and fire-brick making, and raising water. At the latter period there were twenty-two water-wheels, namely:—11 in cotton manufactories, three in woollen, three in calico printing, two in roller and spindle making, and one each in dyeing, fulling, and corn grinding.

The number of families in the parish engaged in trade in 1801, was about 1700; of the 3393 families in 1811, 2757 were employed in manufactories; of the 4787 families in 1821, 4545 were in trade; and of the 6408 in 1831, 6233 were in trade.

The number of persons employed in the cotton trade of Ashton town, and the out-parts of the parish, exclusive of Stalybridge and Lees, was, in 1834, 8396. The steam power was equal to that of 1200 horses, and the water power to 33 horses. According to the returns of the Inspector of Factories, dated May 1st, 1835, the cotton-mills in the entire parish were 51; steam engines, 53; horse power, 1617; water wheels, 11; power, 111; total power, 1728; actual power employed, 1604: children from 9 to 11 years employed, 86; young persons from 11 to 18 employed, 3509; total hands employed in cotton trade, 10,168. Woollen-mills, 3; steam engines, 3; horse power, 12; water wheels, 2; horse power, 15; total power, 27: children between 9 and 11 in woollen-mills, 1; young persons between 11 and 18, 43; total hands in woollen, 117. Silk-mills, 1; steam engines, 1; horse power, 1: children between 9 and 11, in silk-mills, 45; young persons between 11 and 18, 128; total hands

in silk, 250. Total mills in the parish, 55 ; steam engines 7 of 422 horse power, 2 of 80, 8 of 282, 25 of 563, 19 of 260, and 6 of 28 : water wheels, 7 of 97 horse power, and 5 of 29 : total steam engines in manufactories, 67 ; horse power, 1635 : total water wheels in ditto, 13 ; horse power, 126 ; total engines and wheels, 80 ; horse power, 1761 ; actual power employed, 1697 : children between 9 and 11 employed, 132 ; young persons between 11 and 18, 3680 ; total hands employed 10,535.

The increase in the cotton trade in this district in 1836 was such, that it was said a demand would be created for at least 7000 new hands. How far these expectations were realized will appear, in some degree, from the returns of the Factory Inspectors, dated Feb. 9th, 1839, which afford the subjoined information as to the extent of the trade in Ashton Parish at that period :—Cotton manufactories or concerns, 82 (this is not the number of mills, but of firms) ; woollen, 3 ; silk, 1 ; total, 86 : unoccupied concerns, 4 ; actual power employed, equal to 2875 horses ; children between 9 and 13, 339 ; young persons between 13 and 18, 4,047 ; total hands, 12,371, of whom, at least 12,000 are engaged in the cotton trade ; indicating but an increase of 1832 hands from 1835 to 1839. So much for the value of the report alluded to above.

The spinners of the district are chiefly employed in spinning the finer kinds of yarn, — the power-loom weavers in weaving stout printing calicoes, — and the hand-loom weavers in producing ginghams, &c.

“When the cotton trade was in its domestic state there was little fluctuation in prices, little competition between individuals, and the mind became contracted from this general stagnation and its being so seldom roused to exertion. Men being mostly employed alone, or having few but their own families to converse with, had not their understandings rubbed bright by contact and interchange of ideas; they witnessed a monotonous scene of life which communicated a corresponding dulness and mechanical action to their minds. The greatest varieties of scene which they witnessed were the market day of the country town, and the attendance at church on the Sabbath; and the *summum bonum* of their lives was to sit vacant and inactive in each other's houses, to sun themselves in the Market-place, or to talk over news at that great mart of village gossip—the blacksmith's shop.” (Guest.)

The present condition of the cotton manufacturing population presents a widely different state. Now, the immense extent of the traffic, and the consequent great number of enterprising traders, occasions frequent and devastating fluctuations in prices; whilst, on the other hand, the necessities of competition tend to increase commerce and improve machinery. Though, by such causes, mechanism is augmenting, and manual labour diminishing; yet probably as large, if not a greater amount of mere attendants on the automatic apparatus are employed, as the extent of hands displaced by the new methods of production. The concentration of large bodies of workers in the mills has a decided tendency to

render them well disposed and social with each other ; and they thus obtain no slight facilities for promoting, in a great degree, habits of virtue or of vice.

“ In regarding the manufacturing population of this district, we are forcibly struck with its condensation within limited spots ; its consequent means of free inter-communication ; the intelligence, energy, and activity of many of its members, with the coarse low habits of the general mass ; from the want of sound moral and religious education, the slaves of vice, prejudice, and passion ; the bond of union between masters and servants feebly knit, and resembling more the animosity of adverse interests than the salutary influence of the one class, with satisfied subordination on the part of the other. A more formidable array of these habits and propensities may render such a population of an apprehensive character, as their labour on the other hand, may, under due regulation, conduce to the advantage of society.” (Rickards.)

Cotton-mill employment is of a tedious nature, and much more wearisome than laborious ; and, in this, appears the cause of a deal of the intemperance of mill operatives. Attention is more requisite than action in such a calling, and therefore the work becomes tedious. The rate of wages is higher than in the generality of employments where greater physical exertion is called for ; but the hours of work in the latter are considerably less than in factory work. “ Men may be found who have not yielded to the debilitating and improvident habits of the mass, who are living in comfort and decency upon

the average amount of wages earned by the whole population—a sufficient proof, if proof were wanting, that the mischief lies full as much with the labourers themselves, as in the system of labour,” which, though comparatively light, is too long in daily duration.

The domestic comforts of the factory classes are seriously affected by the improvident habits of many of the operatives; and yet there are numbers of working families who are apparently in agreeable circumstances, owing to the practice of sobriety, and the desire for mental cultivation.

“Though the general appearance of the operative is squalid, and the majority of the middle-aged badly dressed, the young women expend considerable sums upon their persons; the extreme cheapness of printed calicoes and muslins giving a taste for showy clothing, the factory girl, with her pale face and languid expression, offers, when decked out in her Sunday and holiday apparel, a strange anomaly with the dirty, unfurnished, and miserable house from which she, in too many cases, issues.” (Gaskell.)

Although the management of cotton-mills is now regulated by legislative enactment, still the internal economy of the factories is variable.—In some establishments the employers manifest the utmost anxiety for the comfort of their hands, whilst the employed are constantly endeavouring to render their labours satisfactory, and to obtain as many rational advantages as are consistent with their position. In other mills the masters are of gross

and selfish habits; and therefore, the workers, in such instances, are often of similar dispositions, debased and careless. The factories of the vitiated class are ill-conducted. It is to such mills the following lines apply:—

“ There, shut for ever from the gladdening sky,
Vice premature, and care’s corroding seal,
Stamp on each sallow cheek their hateful die,
Line the smooth open brow, and sink the saddened eye.”

Whatever censures are bestowed on the factory system by the admirers of the institutions of the olden time, “its morbid distemperature is certainly not so great as that of the agricultural system of England, and it is more accessible to control and amelioration.” “The party who lately declaimed so loudly about the inmates of factories being universally victims of oppression, misery, and vice, if actuated by a philosophical spirit, might have ascertained, very soon, whether Goldsmith’s Auburn, or Crabbe’s Village, reflected the truest picture of their *country’s pride*; and by inspecting thereafter, an increasing factory village, they might have discovered whether the town was staining the country or the country the town.” (Ure.)

“In point of intelligence, there can be no doubt that a manufacturing population far exceeds an agricultural one. The opportunities of associating with each other, the facilities of obtaining books and newspapers, and the discussions in their unions, combinations, and clubs, stimulate and sharpen the intellects of the working classes in towns; whilst the solitary labourer in husbandry too often grows up in stupid ignorance and inertness. Yet

there are too many proofs of want of information among the working classes in towns, and of their liability to delusion; and every one acquainted with these classes must acknowledge the necessity of a better system of education." (Baines.)

The estimated value of the buildings and machinery in the cotton trade in the Parish of Ashton is £1,100,000, and the amount of capital required to work them £400,000. The quantity of yarn spun daily in the cotton-mills of the parish by steam, is as much as would have been spun with the distaff and spindle by 3,000,000 persons.

The hand-loom weavers in this district are not inconsiderable. According to the report of the Commissioners for Inquiry into the State of the Hand-loom Weavers, dated March, 1839, the subjoined were the results of an investigation of the condition of the weavers of Ashton:— Heads of families visited, 483; number of persons employed, 813; number of looms idle, 213; number of persons dependant on the earnings of those employed, 1955; clear total average weekly income, £119. 3s. 3d.; average per family per week, 4s. 11½d. They are chiefly employed in weaving gingham, shawls, &c.

There are no navigable rivers in this part of the country; but it is extensively intersected by *Canals*, which have proved highly useful in promoting the internal traffic of commerce.

The Canal from Manchester to Ashton-under-Lyne and Oldham, was constructed pursuant to an act of par-

liament, passed 1792, 32nd George III., by a company of shareholders : amongst whom were the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, Rev. Thomas Evans, D.D., Benj. A. Heywood, John Lees, Esqrs., &c. By an act passed 1793, the company were empowered to form a branch to Stockport, and another to Hollinwood, both of which were completed. These several navigations extend from Manchester to Ashton, Fairfield to Fairbottom, Waterhouses to Hollinwood, and Clayton to Heaton-Norris, an aggregate length of 18 miles ; and their cost was about £150,000. The funds were raised according to the acts passed 1792, 1793, 1798, 1800, and 1805, in shares of £100 each, and by mortgages, &c. The canals were opened in 1797. Coal and lime are the chief objects of carriage. The principal works of this navigation in Ashton Parish are the tunnel, near Waterhouses, and the reservoir at Crime, an area of five acres.

The idea of forming a connecting link betwixt the west and the east seas suggested the formation of the Huddersfield Canal, which was cut according to acts passed 1794, 1800, 1806. This canal commences in Sir John Ramsden's Canal, at Huddersfield, and passes under Pule Moss, by a tunnel of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, which cost £56,000 ; it then winds through Saddleworth, and entering Ashton parish at Stalybridge, terminates in the Ashton Canal, near the town of Ashton, where it passes through another tunnel. Its length is $19\frac{3}{4}$ miles, and the summit level is 656 feet above the surface of the sea, higher than any other canal in England. Nature having thrown great impediments in the making of this canal, its cost was about £300,000.

On the south side of the town of Ashton, the Peak Forest Canal forms a junction with the Ashton Canal, and crosses the Tame by a high aqueduct. This navigation was formed by the authority of acts passed 1794, 1800, and 1805, and extends from Ashton to Chapel Milton, in Derbyshire, about 15 miles. Its cost was about £140,000.

By the Ashton Canal merchandize is conveyed to Manchester, and thence by water to Liverpool; by the Huddersfield Canal a water conveyance is opened to the German Ocean; and by the Peak Forest Canal a water communication is made into the heart of Derbyshire, for the conveyance of fuel and the reception of lime. The convenience of transit opens, for the coal district, a never-failing market.

The commercial resources of the principal parts of the kingdom have been benefitted by the formation of *Railways*, as they are highly useful for the purposes of general conveyance.—A line of railway, to pass from Manchester to Sheffield, through Peak Forest, was planned in 1830, by Mr. G. Stephenson; and an act of parliament, which cost £11,300, was procured, but the project failed in 1832. A company, entitled “The Manchester, Ashton-under-Lyne, and Sheffield, Railway Company,” was established January, 1836, with a capital of £700,000, in 7000 shares of £100 each. From the estimates of the committee, several facts indicative of the extent of the traffic carried on betwixt Ashton, Stalybridge, and Manchester, were brought out. In a summary of the

passenger traffic, it was stated, that the number of persons annually conveyed to and from Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester, was 54,812; and to and from Stalybridge, Ashton, and Manchester, 87,630: the annual transit of coals from Ashton, was set down at 800 tons. The receipts of the present traffic of the whole line, were estimated at £121,478 per annum, and the prospective traffic at £120,337. The company obtained an act of parliament May 5th, 1837, for cutting the railway from Manchester, by Ashton to Sheffield; and also to form a branch line to Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge. The length of the line will be upwards of 39 miles, including a tunnel of three miles in length, betwixt Woodhead and Dunford-bridge. The works were commenced October 1st, 1838; and the amount expended to June 30th, 1841, was £251,526; the balance due to the bankers at that period, was £5104. The line is expected to be open to the vicinity of Ashton and Hyde in a short time. The branch line to Ashton and Stalybridge has not been commenced; it will join the main line at North-street, in Audenshaw, 4 miles 76 chains from Manchester, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Ashton, and 2 miles 45 chains from Stalybridge. The Ashton station is to be near Mill-lane, $6\frac{1}{2}$ from Manchester; and the Stalybridge Station near the Huddersfield Canal, in the Dukinfield portion of Stalybridge, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Manchester.—Mill-lane, Ashton, is 330 feet above the level of the sea. An unsuccessful attempt was made in 1837, to form a company for constructing a railway from Manchester to Ashton and Stalybridge only; the capital was to have been £200,000.

Thus enriched by Canals and a Railway, surrounded by Coal-mines, and benefitted by an ample supply of water from the Tame, Ashton is admirably situated, both for the purposes of trade and manufacture. Mills abound on the banks of the river, and the dyers find in its waters a source of continual purification. The rapid increase of the town of Ashton, arising from the extension of the Cotton trade has been noticed. The town of Stalybridge has augmented in an equal if not greater ratio to Ashton. The principal manufacturing villages Lees, Mossley, Hooley Hill, Hurst, and Audenshaw, have become so large that if situated in agricultural districts, they would be deemed important towns. The environs of Ashton and Stalybridge are decorated by the elegant mansions of the wealthy manufacturers, which are mostly belted by tastefully disposed pleasure-grounds. The dwellings of the humbler classes are generally of neat appearance as regards the exterior, and many are agreeable abodes internally, there are numerous cheerful habitations of the middle classes, equally far from display on the one hand, or meanness on the other.

The *Population* of the town has multiplied with great rapidity during the last and present century. I infer from the information conveyed by the ancient rent roll of the Assheton's, that the population of the town in 1422 was about 150; and in 1618 about 400. Shortly after the introduction of the cotton trade, namely in 1775 the first satisfactory census was taken, its results as far as relate to the town, were as follows:—Inhabitants, 2859; Houses, 553; Families, 599; Males, 1406; Females,

1453; Married, 982; Widowers, 50; Widows, 81; Persons under five years of age, 509; 5 to 10, 396; 10 to 20, 541; 20 to 50, 1044; 50 to 70, 307; 70 to 90, 62.

Towards the close of the last century a great number of families from the adjacent counties, and from Ireland, settled here, in order to participate in the advantages of trade, so that the population multiplied considerably; during the American War, two suburbs of the town were erected named Charlestown and Boston.

The number of houses paying window-tax in Ashton Town in 1793, was 279; Boston, 28; Charlestown, 23; total, 330: this return is obviously under the real number, as compared with that of 1775. In 1796, the town, including Charlestown, Boston, Hurst, Botany-Bay, and the immediate vicinities, contained 1600 houses; and, estimating five inmates to each house, the population would then be 8000; but this, as a statement of the population of the town alone, is manifestly too high: 5000 would be nearer the truth. In 1801, when the first decennial census was taken, the population was about 6500; and in 1811, about 1700. The returns were not compiled separately for the four divisions of the parish until 1821, when a distinct census for Ashton-under-Lyne is first supplied. The total number of persons at the last period named was 9222: males, 4514; females, 4708; families, 1750; inhabited houses, 1643; uninhabited, 36; building, 22; families engaged in agriculture, 19; families engaged in trade, 1690; families not connected with trade or agriculture, 41. In 1831, the

number of persons was 14,670; indicating an increase of 5448 from 1821 to 1831: males, 7176; females, 7494; families, 2823; inhabited houses, 2648; uninhabited, 147; building, 35; families engaged in agriculture, 16; families engaged in trade, 2784; and families not connected with trade or agriculture, 23; and males twenty years of age and upwards 3442.

In 1834-5, a statistical survey was taken of 3835 houses in the town of Ashton; of which, 2149 were separate dwellings; 627 were sitting-rooms; 59 cellars; 69 public-houses; and 89 beer-houses: the population inhabiting dwellings, was 14,604; inhabiting rooms, 627; cellars, 59. Of this population, 4723 were able to read and write; 4334 only able to read. The heads of families who professed to belong to the Church of England, were 1517; and lodgers who professed the same, 23: heads of families professing to be Dissenters, 624; lodgers professing the same, 139: heads of families professing to be Catholics, 399; lodgers who professed the same, 290: heads of families not making any religious profession, 1293; lodgers of similar opinions, 584.* In 1841 the total of persons was 22,686, forming an increase of 8,016 from 1831 to 1841, attributable to the extension of the cotton trade, males 10,724, females, 11,962, inhabited houses, 4066; uninhabited, 495; building, 37; total of houses, 4598. The official return of the census of 1841 is not yet published. The proportion of the working class to the whole population of the town is 81 per cent.

* Paper read to the British Association, 1837.

The roll of the tenants of the manor in 1422, regarding the enumeration of occupiers as strictly correct, induces me to think that the population of the parish, at that time, was about 1380; and I infer from the data furnished by the rate books, that the number of persons in the parish in 1618, was about 3300. A survey of the population was taken in 1775, and presents several rather peculiar features; the annexed are the results:—

	Parish, exclusive of Town.	Entire Parish.
Inhabitants	5097	7956
Houses	941	1494
Families	971	1570
Males	2584	3990
Females	2513	3966
Married.....	1679	2661
Widowers.....	67	117
Widows.....	95	176
Under 5 years of age ..	896	1405
From 5 to 10 „ ..	764	1160
„ 10 „ 20 „ ..	1011	1552
„ 20 „ 50 „ ..	1882	2926
„ 50 „ 70 „ ..	471	778
„ 70 „ 90 „ ..	73	135

The rate of increase of the population of the rural portions of the parish is, of course, smaller than that of the town. The number of houses paying the window-tax in the part of the parish exclusive of the town, in 1793, was 824; and in the entire parish, 1154: but this was clearly far from the real number of houses at that time. The parliamentary returns of the population for the

decennial periods, have been as follows, excepting the numbers set down in 1801 and 1811, for the population of the town, which are computations:—

	Parish, exclusive of Town.	Entire Parish.	Town.
In 1801, Inhabitants ..	9,132..	15,632..	6,500
„ 1811, „ ..	11,252..	19,052..	7,800
„ 1821, „ ..	16,745..	25,967..	9,222
„ 1831, „ ..	18,927..	33,597..	14,670
„ 1841, „ ..	23,657..	46,343..	22,686

The increase in the population of the parish from 1775 to 1801, was 7676; 1801 to 1811, 3420; 1811 to 1821, 6915; 1821 to 1831, 7630; 1831 to 1841, 12,746. The total number of houses in 1801, was 3018.

According to the returns of 1811, the parish contained inhabited houses, 3042; families, 3393; houses building, 0; houses uninhabited, 85; males, 9146; females, 9906; families engaged in agriculture, 213; families in trade, 2757; families not connected with trade or agriculture, 423. In 1821 the number of families engaged in agriculture, was 152; in trade, 4545; otherwise employed, 90; total families, 4787. In 1831 the number of agricultural families, was 115; families in trade, 6233, and otherwise employed 60; total families, 6408. In 1831 there were of males 20 years of age, 7821; occupiers of land employing labourers, 24; occupiers not employing labourers, 98; labourers in agriculture, 57; labourers in manufactures, 204; persons in retail trade, 1452; capitalists, bankers, and professional men, 171; labourers in labour not agricultural, 5614; males not labourers or servants 20 years of age, 187; male servants 20 years of

age, 14; male servants under 20, 13; female servants 251.
—Population Returns, 1831, vol. 1, p. 294.

The returns for 1821, 1831, and 1841, present the following results; similar returns for the Town are previously given:—

	Parish exclusive of Town.	Entire Parish.
1821, Inhabited Houses....	2812	4465
1831, „	3312	5960
1841, „	4158	8234
1821, Uninhabited Houses..	65	101
1831, „ ..	176	323
1841, „ ..	479	974
1821, Houses in Building ..	3	35
1831, „ ..	30	65
1841, „ ..	35	72
1821, Houses.....	2880	4601
1831, „	3518	6348
1841, „	4682	9280
1821, Males	8406	12,920
1831, „	9305	16,481
1841, „	11,471	22,197
1821, Females	8339	13,047
1831, „	9622	17,116
1841, „	12,186	24,146

The population of the several divisions may be thus summed up:—

	1821.	1831.	1841.
Ashton Town ..	9222	14,670	22,686
Hartshead	9137	10,073	12,760
Knott-lanes....	3827	4,862	5,523
Audenshaw....	3781	3,992	5,374

The population of the town of Stalybridge, in 1831, was 14,216; in 1841, about 20,000: but the principal portion of it is in Cheshire. The population of the Hartshead or Ashton-under-Lyne portion, in 1841, was 5747.

The population of the principal villages in the parish, is as follows:—

	1831.	1841.
Hooley Hill	1500	2000
Mossley	1300	1500
Lees	1400	1700
Hurst Brook	—	1600

The chief village is Lees-cum-Hey.

The progress of population is further illustrated by the annexed tables of baptisms, marriages, and burials, at the Parish Church of Ashton, during the last and present centuries.* In the first year of the registers, 1594, there were 90 baptisms, and 21 marriages; the register of burials does not commence till 1596, in which year there were 10.

	Baptisms.	Burials.	Marriages.
1765....	235	159	—
1775....	332	241	—
1785....	427	201	—
1793....	545	348	—
1830....	800	703	184
1840....	1343	700	200

The National system of Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, commenced in 1837, and will

* Dr. Percival's Observations on Population, p. 57.

ultimately prove of great value for legal as well as statistical purposes.—The towns of Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham, Stalybridge, Middleton, and a number of adjacent populous townships in Lancashire and Cheshire, form one Superintendent Registrar's District,—comprising fifteen Ordinary Registrars' districts, and a population of 133,474, according to the census of 1831. The births and deaths registered in the district of Ashton Town have amounted to the annexed sums:—

	Births.		Deaths.
1837-8	662	....	515
1838-9	814	....	782
1839-40.....	840	....	701

The average number of births registered in the Parish of Ashton is about 1800, and of deaths about 1400.—The number of births registered in the Ashton-under-Lyne and Oldham Superintendent Registrars' district, in 1838, was 5723; 1839, 6799: deaths, 1838, 4488; 1839, 5501. The district contains 17 churches and chapels of the establishment in which marriages are solemnized, and 18 places of worship of the dissenters that are registered for the solemnization of marriages. The number of episcopal marriages in 1838, was 1475; dissenters, 84: 1839, episcopal, 927; dissenters, 85.

The rate of mortality in the manufacturing district of Ashton-under-Lyne and Oldham united population in 1831, 133,474, as compared with the mortality of the agricultural districts of Ormskirk, Fylde, Garstang,

Clitheroe, Ulverstone, and Chorley united population in 1831, 139,597, was as follows, in 1838-9:—

	Manufacturing District.	Agricultural District.
Epidemic, Endemic, and Con- tagious Diseases.....	819	449
Nervous Diseases	891	371
Diseases of the Respiratory Organs	1237	686
„ of the Organs of Circulation	17	24
„ „ Digestive Organs ..	429	165
„ „ Urinary Organs	18	17
„ „ Organs of Generation	72	31
„ „ Organs of Locomotion	38	13
„ „ Integumentary System	6	2
„ of Uncertain Seat	559	347
„ of Old Age	229	310
Violent Deaths.....	104	127
Causes not specified.....	69	196
Total.....	4488	2738

This table suggests many matters for observation, relative to the causes of the difference in the rate of mortality betwixt populous and unpopulous districts, but the discrepancy principally arises from the density of the people in manufacturing places, partly from the nature of their employments, and in some degree from the want of prudent and cleanly habits amongst the lowest class of the town residents. A number of those excellent institutions, *Friendly Societies*, for the support of the members during sickness, and the defrayal of the costs of funerals,

have existed in this parish many years, and conduce not only to the welfare of the contributors but tend to create increased feelings of sociality amongst the working class. The manners of the body of the inhabitants have not improved in the same ratio as the buildings and manufactories, and yet the number of intelligent and sober operatives is considerably greater than it was a few years ago; the bulk of the population however is in a deplorable state of ignorance, and much addicted to habits of intemperance; and yet though negligent in many cases of domestic welfare they are generally neat in their personal appearance.

Schools.—The district is not provided with any ancient endowed school, and yet a school house was erected in the seventeenth century on land given by the manorial owners adjacent to the Church-yard, for the education of the children of the parishioners generally, the means of its support have been chiefly derived from the parents of the scholars, the school was re-built by the parish in 1721, partly under the auspices of the Earl of Warrington: Mr. John Newton, of Woodhouses, gave by Will dated February 17, 1731 to the school of Ashton £3 yearly, for the education of six poor children, two to be nominated by the Rector, two by the Curate, and two by the Wardens, the children not to remain above two years each, they are taught to read and write. Mr. John Walker of Manchester having by his Will dated July 7, 1755, devised the interest of £600 to be applied to the education of poor children in Ashton, Oldham, and Saddleworth, £8 of the annual interest was divided amongst

three schools in Ashton, £4 for ten scholars, Taunton £2 for five, and Hey £2 for five. The school was re-built in 1807, and again re-erected and enlarged in 1827; it is a spacious pile, decorated by a mullet sable on a shield of white marble, the arms of Ashton; about 200 children are taught daily by subscription, and scholars payments. The appointment of master is vested in the Earl of Stamford and the Rector. St. Peter's Sunday School is an excellent edifice built in 1838.

In a Report on the state of Elementary Education in several towns of Lancashire in 1840, by the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, it is stated that Ashton has not one public infant school or day school; and but one-nineteenth part of the population are found in the dame and common schools only. A writer in the Manchester Sunday School Magazine asserts, that in Ashton, Stalybridge and Dukinfield, only one child in forty-six attends daily instruction, and yet one in four ought always to be at school. A large proportion of the poor children of these populous places are destitute of efficient moral and religious training.* As there are numbers of children who are neither taught in schools nor employed in factories, there is a great want of public day schools. By the pecuniary assistance of the wealthy, and the personal services of virtuous operatives, great attention is paid to schooling poor children on Sundays, by means of Sunday schools, which is highly necessary where many

* The number of children of the Working Class in the day schools of Ashton, Stalybridge, and Dukinfield in 1835 was 2496.

of the juveniles are engaged in the cotton-mills on the week days. "The labours of Sunday school teachers are of immense value, but the instruction is so superficial that it cannot be properly termed education: there ought to be a system to teach the population to master their appetites, to contend with their passions, to resist temptation, and to seek through all their lives that improvement of mind and heart, which may end in the moral and intellectual perfection of a better state."

The annexed tables exhibit the state of Sunday Schools at three distinct periods:

	1823.	1831.	1841.
Episcopal Schools in the Town ..	1	2	2
" " " Parish..	4	4	4
Episcopal Scholars " Town ..	600	1330	2400
" " " Parish..	700	1216	1300
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total.....	1300	2546	3700
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Dissenters' Schools in the Town..	5	5	6
" " " Parish..	12	13	14
Dissenters' Scholars " Town ..	1200	2500	2275
" " " Parish..	1600	3520	3556
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total.....	2800	6020	5831
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Schools for all Denominations of			
Children in the Town..	0	0	0
" " " Parish..	3	2	2
Scholars of all Denominations, Parish	400	320	500

It appears, from this table, that in 1823 there were 24 Sunday Schools, and 4500 scholars; 1831, 26 schools, 8886 scholars; and 1841, 29 schools, and 10,031 scholars.

Parochial Affairs.—The assessment and distribution of the rates for the relief of the poor and other purposes, as far as relate to Ashton Parish, are in the management of one body of overseers, of whom there is an honorary overseer to each of the four divisions. The annual value of the property in the parish assessed to the county rates in 1815, was £33,548; 1829, £71,837; 1840, £143,803: in the Magisterial division of Ashton, 1815, £44,087; 1829, £90,645; 1840, £172,203.—The expenditure for parochial purposes, in the year ending October 28, 1823, amounted to £4,001 2s. 4d.; within the same period £1,071 18s. 6d. was paid to the mothers of illegitimate children; and £453 3s. 11d. for salaries and casualties.—In the year ending March 25, 1834, the sum of £5,801, 9s. 4d. was collected as poor's rates, of which £1,365 14s. 10d. was paid for illegitimate children. The poor's rates of 1837 amounted to £4390. The proportion of county rate paid by the parish in 1830, was £1619; 1834, £1035 15s. 9d.; 1836, £1041; 1840, £1989 11d.

Ashton was constituted a Poor-law Union in 1837; the union is composed of Ashton Parish and the following townships: Droylsden, Denton, Haughton, (Lancashire); Dukinfield, Staley, Newton, Godley, Hattersley, Matley, Hollingworth, Mottram, and Tintwistle, (Cheshire.)

Ashton elects five guardians ; Dukinfield, two ; and the remainder one each ; total, twenty.—The workhouse for Ashton is an ancient building, situate on the east side of the Market-place, in the town.

Charities.—Considering the wealth of the town, Ashton is not remarkable for its charitable institutions. It appears, from the Sixteenth Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring concerning Charities, that Dame Elizabeth Booth devised, January 17th, 1619, to the overseers of the poor of Ashton, the sum of £2 10s. a year, to be laid out in the purchase of bread, to be distributed weekly to the poor attending morning service. Amongst other bequests of this pious lady, 10s. a year is appointed to be paid to a preacher in the parish church of St. John, Chester, for delivering a sermon on such day as the mayor may appoint ; and the sum of £2 is left to the mayor, aldermen, and common-council, for a “*good-drinking*” immediately after the sermon!—The sum of twenty shillings a year was bequeathed by Priscilla Pickford to the poor of Ashton, June 15, 1740, which is distributed, in shillings, to the communicants at the church, on Christmas-Day. Miles Hilton, of Audenshaw, left, in 1741, the interest of £130, now £145, to purchase ten stuff gowns, to be given, by the Rector and Wardens, to ten poor old women who attend church. Mrs. Heywood granted the interest of £15, to be given, in sixpences, to thirty old women of the parish, every Christmas-Day. Mr. James Walker, of Manchester, by his will, dated November, 1749, gave the interest of £250 yearly, to be laid out in the purchase of grey wool-

len cloth, to be made into twelve coats, to be given, by the Rector and Wardens, in October, yearly, to twelve poor old men who are not paupers. John Sandiford, gent., of Deanshut, gave £5 to the poor, February 17th, 1575. The Charities of Audenshaw and Stalybridge are noticed elsewhere. For the purpose of providing cheap medical aid for the sick poor, institutions named Boards of Health have been established; their support is derived from subscriptions, and, by this means, advice and medicines are supplied.—“The Ashton and Dukinfield Female Benevolent Institution” was established March, 1827, for the purpose of assisting poor lying-in women and others with relief, in clothes, linen, &c.

A Bible Society, auxiliary to the London Society, was established here April 2nd, 1823; and the public liberality once displayed towards this institution seemed to prove that the dormant flame of benevolence was ready to burst forth wherever it was excited by proper objects. The principal religious bodies are possessed of flourishing Missionary Societies for Promoting Christian Knowledge amongst Heathens in Foreign Lands.

There is a Savings' Bank, formed in 1829; it has been of much advantage to the prudent class of operatives, as will appear from the subjoined table:—

	1833.		1840.
Amount deposited	£3994	....	£5355
„ withdrawn	815	....	3296

The number of depositors on the 20th of December, 1840. was 530, the deposits of 327 of whom did not exceed £20 each.

Literary Institution.—A society for the literary and scientific improvement of the working class, designated “The Ashton and Dukinfield Mechanics’ Institution,” was established in 1825, and re-organised in 1836; but in 1840 the number of members was smaller than it had been for several years, and consequently the resources of the institution are impaired. That such a useful society should be suffered to languish is degrading to the inhabitants of the place.—The amount of members in 1840, was 153, or only one in 163 of the population of Ashton and its immediate suburbs. The library contains 791 volumes of well-selected works; and classes for the study of arithmetic, grammar, instrumental music, and landscape and figure drawing, meet on stated evenings in the week. The reading and other rooms are in Warrington-street, Ashton; and the charge to members for the general advantages of the institute is but eight shillings per annum. The president for 1840 was Charles Hindley, Esq., M. P.

Public Buildings.—The only public building for municipal purposes which existed for ages was the *Court-House*, a large edifice; the present pile was, apparently, built in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and is still used for manorial meetings, &c. A new pile, named the *Gas Buildings*, erected adjacent to the Gas Works, in Oldham-road, in 1827, were intended to be used as Police Offices, Assembly-rooms, and a Theatre; but the objects of the designers have not been fully realised, although one portion of the neat fabric has been occupied as a Theatre. A large dwelling, on the east

side of the Market-place, was converted, in 1834, into a temporary *Police Office*.—The erection of a public hall sufficiently commodious for all requisite local purposes, and worthy of the modern importance of the town, being highly desirable, the Commissioners of Police determined, in September, 1839, to raise a *Town Hall*. An eligible site was secured, on the north side of the Market-place, and the funds necessary for the erection (about £6000) were provided by a mortgage of the tolls of the market. The works were commenced in April, 1840, from designs of Mr. Young, architect, of Manchester; and the edifice is now (September, 1841) nearly completed. It is a handsome building of stone, of the Corinthian order. The style of architecture is Roman; but, as respects the disposition of the columns composing the order, and the substitution of the plain piers, or antæ, at the angles of the building, for the range of pilasters usually introduced along the front and side walls, the simpler peculiarities of the Grecian style have been resorted to.* The main portion of the entrance front is composed of four engaged columns in *antis*, surmounted by an appropriate attic; in the central compartment of which, (designed as a pedestal for a sculptured figure of Justice) is an inscription recording the date of the building, 1840. The remainder of the front consists of two minor compartments or wings, having only a plain parapet above the cornice. These plainer portions, although forming part of the order, and designed in perfect

* Communication of Mr. Young, architect.—(Civil Engineer and Architects' Journal, January, 1841.)

keeping with the central pavillion of the façade, serve to connect and blend the comparatively enriched front of the edifice with the more subdued architecture of the two sides. The building consists, internally of two stories (principal and first floor) and a basement: the former of these, distinguished as a sort of rustic arcade, is approached, in front, by a lofty flight of steps, flanked on each side by a projecting portion of the *stylobate*, or continued pedestal, on which the order itself is elevated. The stone necessarily used for the purpose of economy, is of too coarse and porous a nature to admit of that delicacy of execution which could have been desired; but, nevertheless, owing to the uniform use of that material throughout, and the harmonious connexion of the side elevations with the front, the edifice presents an appearance of solidity and importance hardly consistent with the comparatively small sum expended in its erection. The interior contains a Police Office and Prison, with a residence for the principal police officer, Offices, and Committee-rooms, with a spacious public room, 83 feet by 40 feet, for the holding of magistrates' sessions, large meetings, assemblies, &c.

The town is well lighted by gas, supplied from *Gas Works*, which were erected by a large body of shareholders, at a cost of about £35,000. The company was incorporated by Act of Parliament, passed May 20, 1825, and the streets were first lighted in 1826. The works are situate in Oldham-road, and comprise gasometers of such ample dimensions as will hold 100,000 feet of gas; the main pipes exceed eight miles in length.

Hartshead.

THE Division of Hartshead is the largest in the parish, and comprises nearly the whole of its eastern side, stretching over 1513 customary acres. The centre is about two miles north-east of the town.—The name Hartshead, is supposed to have arisen from a covert or *shed* for deer of the *hart* species. The name, doubtless originated when this tract was a forest, equally composed of wood and heath: then forming—

“ The woodland wild—where the dun deer roam,
And the song-birds build them a happy home.”

The north-east portion of Hartshead contains several high elevations,—the principal is Hartshead-Pike, the highest point in the hamlet of Hartshead, on which formerly stood a conical-shaped fabric of stone, called a pike, with a vane at its apex, which was cut into the form of the head of a hart. On the west side of the pike were inscribed the annexed lines:—

“ Look well at me before you go,
And see you nothing at me throw.”

“ This Pike was erected, by public subscription, 1758.”
This tower was generally regarded as a sea-mark; and was also formerly used as a beacon in times of public

alarm. So rapid was its decay, that in 1794 it was split from top to bottom, half-a-yard in width; shortly afterwards, the whole walls fell into ruin, and only a few stones are remaining. A public subscription was lately promoted for the re-erection.—The prospect from the site is extensive and diversified. It was once customary with the farmers of Hartshead to pay small sums in lieu of tythe, at a meeting that was held around a large stone, at Twarl-Hill, designated the tythe-stone.

Heyrod-Hall, anciently Heyrode, was, at an early period, the mansion of a family of the local name. John del Heyrod was the possessor in 1422. Subsequently the Dukinfields, of Dukinfield, and the Shelmerdines were the owners,—the latter for one hundred and fifty years. The house was rebuilt in 1638.

Hydes is a solitary but agreeably situated habitation, belonging, in 1823, to the family of Hyde.

Gamerog-Bank was a bequest of W. Hulme, Esq., to Brazennose College.

Mosdelee, anciently enjoyed by the Bardsleys, has been long the estate of the Halls, of whom was the Rev. Samuel Hall, M.A., first minister of St. Peter's Church, Manchester.

Lusley-End was, according to tradition, a dwelling of a branch of the Ashtons, of Ashton. A Robert Ashton, gent., of Lusley, occurs in 1618.

Ross-bottom, an old farm, near Stalybridge, was held by Robertus de Rossbotham, in 1422, by the rent of a rose, when the valley adjacent was a rugged wood.

Scout-Mill, on the banks of the Tame, a short distance to the south of Mossley, is described by Dr. Aikin, in 1794, "as a place well known for its very rural and romantic situation, and partly for its melancholy and unfortunate inhabitants." It was, at the period named, a private lunatic asylum. The scenery at this spot has been injured by the formation of a new road.

Wilshaw-Dale-Grove, in Smallshaw, is a pleasing residence, of the Higginbottoms.

Staly-Bank is a good house, of the Rev. Joseph Saville Robarts Evans, situate near the Tame.

Heyrod-House, the seat of Ralph Ousey, Esq., is occupied by Legh Richmond, Esq.

The division contains two Episcopal Chapels, viz.,—Mossley Chapel, and St. George's Chapel, Stalybridge. (See article Stalybridge.) That at Mossley was built in 1755, by subscription, and enlarged 1786. It is large but plain, and contains a tablet to the memory of Catherine Kenworthy, died 1776, aged 18. The curacy is of the annual value of £127, in the patronage of the Rector of Ashton.—The Dissenters have four Chapels, viz.,—two of the Methodist New Connexion, Mossley, built 1823, and re-built 1835, at a cost of £2600; and Hurst-Brook

erected, 1824, one of the General Baptists, and one of the Stephenites. (See Stalybridge.)—The inhabitants are principally employed in the various processes of the cotton trade, and in coal-mining. The Huddersfield Canal skirts the district.

Mossley is a large village, on the north-eastern side of Hartshead, three miles north-east of Ashton. The portion of the village called Brook-bottom, is in Saddleworth, Yorkshire. About 1773, this place was a small village; but in 1794, there were about 100 houses; in 1821, they had increased to 300; and in 1841, to 500. These estimates include Brook-bottom. There are seven cotton-mills: formerly the staple trade consisted of coarse woollens.—A Mechanics' Institution was commenced in October, 1840.—Two fairs for cattle are held June 21st, and last Monday in October.

Hurst-Brook, the principal place in the hamlet of Hurst was, in 1422, the patrimony of Nicholas de Hyrst, and for more than three centuries was an obscure rural spot. Owing, in part, to its vicinity to the town of Ashton, (a quarter of a mile) it has become a considerable village; and yet, in 1803, there were only a few detached houses: now there are upwards of 300, and two cotton-mills.

Higher Hurst is remarkable for the large cotton-mills and neat mansions of John Whittaker, Esq., and Brothers.

The following places are small villages and hamlets:

Hurst-Nook, 1 mile north of Ashton; *Hurst-Cross*, adjacent to Hurst-Nook; *Hazlehurst*, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-east of Ashton; *Bottoms*, 4 miles north-east; *Heyrod*, 3, east-north-east; *Hartshead*, 3, north-east; *Smallshaw*, 1, north; *Lusley*, $2\frac{1}{2}$, north-east; and *Ridgehill-Lane*, $1\frac{1}{2}$, east-north-east.

The population of Hartshead, in 1821, was 9137; 1831, 10,073; 1841, 12,760. The Chapel School, at Mossley, was built in 1785. The Methodist New Connexion School, Higher Hurst, received, in 1840, a bequest of £100, devised by the late John Whittaker, Esq.,—There are Sunday-Schools at Mossley, Hurst-Brook, Higher Hurst, Heyrod, and Hartshead-Green.

THE TOWN OF STALYBRIDGE.

STALEY-BRIDGE, or, as lately changed to Stalybridge, is one of the largest towns, either in Lancashire or Cheshire, wholly owing its origin to the success which followed the establishment of the cotton manufacture. It is seated in a deep valley, extending along both sides of the River Tame, which, here, divides Lancashire and Cheshire: the Parish of Ashton-under-Lyne, in the former county, from the Parishes of Stockport and Mottram-en-Longdendale, in the latter county. In these three districts the place is jointly situated; and there is, here, a unity of three parochial interests. The Lancashire, or second principal portion of the town, is in the Hartshead division of Ashton Parish, the principal portion of the town is in Cheshire, in Dukinfield township, Stockport parish: the remainder of the place is also in Cheshire, in Stayley township, Mottram-en-Longdendale parish. These portions are closely connected by the antient bridge over the Tame, which gave name to the town, as well as by two stone bridges and an iron bridge. Such parts of these respective townships as form the town of Stalybridge, are comprehended in one district, namely,—the Police limits of Stalybridge, defined as the established boundaries of the town, by a late Police Act. About twelve thousand of the inhabitants reside in Dukinfield, five thousand in Hartshead, and three thousand in Stayley.

Stalybridge is seven miles east-south-east of Manchester; 1 mile east of Ashton-under-Lyne; 5 south-south-east of Oldham; 8 north-north-east of Stockport; $2\frac{1}{4}$ north-north-east of Hyde; and 186 north-north-east of London; nearly in 53 28 north latitude, and about 2 4 west longitude

The name Stalybridge is derived from the township of Staly, or Staley, being connected in this portion of the vale of the Tame with the adjacent division of Hartshead, by a bridge, of considerable antiquity. The district of Stayley, in the Parish of Mottram-en-Longdendale, was formerly, and is yet, in some degree, a wild and romantic region, interspersed with bold hills, and the moorish gullies separating them. From these then solitary glens, poured the tributary streams of the Tame, through woods almost impenetrable, except to the half-civilized huntsman. Such was the rude and savage state of this tract on both sides of the river, when the Romans constructed a road from their station at Stockport to that at Castleshaw, in Saddleworth, yet known by the designation of "Stayley-Street." This way passed the foot of that once impending rock, near Stalybridge, named Castle-hill. At a subsequent period, Bucton Castle reared its warlike walls on one of the hills of Micklehurst; and, in a later age, *Stayley-Hall* rose with its gables, as the seat of Robert de *Staveley*, in 1343, and his descendants, who held the manor from the superior lords of Mottram. The marriage of Elizabeth, heiress of Ralph Stayley, Esq., to Sir Thos. de Assheton, in 1471, united the two bordering families, and ultimately contributed to the advantage of this,—the

intervening village. The heiresses of the Asshetons marrying the Booths of Dunham, and their successors becoming similarly allied to the earls of Stamford, the earl of that name is the present Lord of Stayley, for which a court baron is held.

“The scenery of the neighbourhood is bold and impressive; but those enemies to the picturesque—pit coal and steam-engines, have diminished the natural beauties, and substituted in their place employment for the poor and opulence for the wealthy. The views from the summit of ‘*The Wild Bank*,’ elevated as it is (thirteen hundred feet above the level of the sea,) are very extensive; and, though the axe of the woodman has prostrated the stately oaks, which, in the time of the Staveleighs, and for several ages afterwards, clothed the neighbouring vallies, yet there is still here much of grandeur and beauty.”

The intercourse betwixt the two counties, at this point, becoming daily more common and reciprocally beneficial, a bridge was erected, probably at an early period of the seventeenth century. About 1707, this structure was re-built by the landholders of the vicinity.

For several centuries, a few straggling habitations were all that constituted the place, which neither increased nor retrograded till the situation was judiciously chosen by manufacturers, for the erection of their works.

Castle-Hill, improperly called *Castle-Hall*, is an ancient abode, situate in Dukinfield, on a steep rock, near

the river Tame, almost in the midst of the modern town of Stalybridge. The house is said to have been re-built by William Dukinfield, Esq., (son of Sir Robert Dukinfield, of Dukinfield, Bart.) who died August 30th, 1735. The Kenworthys, woollen clothiers, were long the owners, and the late John Lees, Esq., cotton-spinner, who died August 25th, 1824, was resident here.

Formerly there was but one dwelling bearing the name of *Rossbottom*, or *Rassbottom*, (Hartshead): this was the habitation of Robert de Rasbotham, in 1422.

Thompson-Cross (Hartshead,) received its designation from a plain cross which stood at the junction of several narrow lanes.

Gorse-Hall (Dukinfield,) was so named from the abundance of furze on the adjacent grounds.

Dr. Aikin states, that the place was “famous for a *great length of time* for weavers, dyers, and pressers of woollen cloth.” These branches flourished in the commencement of the present century, so that here was the western verge of the woollen manufacture, which extended through the vales of the Tame and the Etherow. In 1748, the principal employment of the inhabitants was the spinning of worsted yarn for the Nottingham hosiers; but the cotton trade prevailed in a slight degree, in its domestic stage. At this time, a single dyer monopolized all the trade in his line, with the aid of two mastiff dogs, who were made to grind the wares, by turning a sort of

canine *tread-mill*, similar in construction to those in which squirrels are sometimes placed, and to which a piece of grinding machinery was attached. At the period alluded to the number of houses was about fifty-four, and the inhabitants amounted to one hundred and forty. In 1763, the population had increased to five hundred persons, and cotton-spinning and weaving were becoming common in the cottage garrets and shops. The first cotton-mill was erected by a person of the name of Hall, in the year 1776, in which carding was performed by water power, and spinning by hand. The year 1776 was a memorable era in the annals of the town, for the old episcopal chapel, as well as the first mill, were erected in that year. The place then consisted of a group of houses, ranging along the lane betwixt the bridge and Rassbottom, and a number of houses straggled on Cocker-Hill.

In 1794, Dr. Aikin describes Stalybridge as a “very large and extensive village, in a continued street of half-a-mile, well paved, the houses well built, some of stone, but the greatest part of brick.” At the period of the Doctor’s highly-favourable sketch, the houses were about two hundred and twenty, and the population one thousand one hundred. From 1776 to 1801, Messrs. Halls remained the only cotton-manufacturers who carried on the processes of the trade in a mill.—About 1796, the first steam-engine erected here (one of six horses’ power) was introduced into Messrs. Hall’s mill,* by Mr. N. Hall. The introduction of the improved machinery into the

* Baines, 12mo., v. 2, p. 555.

manufacture of cotton had here to encounter a violent opposition, and to such a pitch were the threats of the populace, and the apprehensions of the mill-owner raised, that the doors were locked by day as well as by night, and the mill resembled a garrison. Time served to dissipate these alarms, and to reconcile the people to the progress of mechanical improvements. The growth of the town, both in population and trade, has been extremely rapid. It has been swelled into importance by the advantages of its local situation. "Placed on the banks of the Tame, the parent, as it may be called, of the Mersey, near to an ample supply of coal, and enjoying, through the medium of the Huddersfield Canal, the advantages of inland navigation, this place seems marked out as one of the favourite resorts of the manufacturers."

No branch of the cotton-trade has perhaps been so uniformly successful as the spinning; and it is to this circumstance principally that Stalybridge owes its wealth and numbers. In the year 1801, Messrs. Lees, Cheet-ham & Co., erected an engine of 40-horse power, to work their cotton-mill. — An intelligent inhabitant remarks, that it is probable no place has increased so amazingly within the last half century, in the number of the buildings, the population, and the cotton manufactories, and the consequent improvement in the pecuniary condition of the people.

In 1814, there were nearly twelve factories; in 1818, they had increased to about sixteen. During the first twenty years of the present century, the excellent position

of Stalybridge in its advantages of fuel and facilities of conveyance were duly appreciated: so that the town became larger every year; the streets multiplied rapidly; houses started into existence as if by magic; extensive factories reared their massive walls; and the site of the woods of Stayley became a flourishing town.—In 1823, the spinning mills, inclusive of loom mills, were twenty-six; and in 1825, the spinning factories, exclusive of loom mills, amounted to twenty-two. In 1831, the number of cotton-mills was twenty-five; and in 1841, their number, in the town and vicinity, was thirty-two. The amount of hands engaged in these numerous manufactories is upwards of 9000.

In 1825, the mills were worked by twenty-nine steam-engines (and by six water-wheels,) of the aggregate amount of 862 horse power. In 1831, there were about thirty-eight steam-engines (and several water wheels,) equal to upwards of 1000 horse power. In 1823, these engines gave motion to 200,000 spindles; in 1825, to 354,580 spindles; and in 1841, to 536,000.—The number of power-looms in 1825, was 2470: the present number is about 5000.

The aggregate amount of the net earnings of 8,542 hands, in Stalybridge and Dukinfield, for the month ending May 4th, 1833, was £19,409 7s. 5½d., giving an average of 13s. 6d. per week to each hand: the present average weekly wages may be about 10s. per hand.—There are several machine works and iron-foundries.

The population of Stalybridge is similar to that of other large manufacturing towns, of a mixed and fluctuating character; many of the streets have been rather hastily and imperfectly constructed; numbers of the dwellings are small, and of slight erection; the inmates are too much crowded; and the low situation of a great portion of the town is unfavourable to health, yet many habitations are neatly built and well placed. There are too many heads of families who wholly neglect the education of their children, hence incentives to vice remain unchecked.

Although the factory system admits of improvement in its moral and mental qualities, "the hardest labour in the worst room, in the worst-constructed factory, is less hard, less cruel, and less demoralizing, than the labour in the best of coal-mines." "As a body, the manufacturers are wealthy—clever—have extensive business connexions; but their political interest is the most feeble of that of all branches of commercial industry, for they have allowed their accumulated riches to entomb them. They have huge factory-like houses within the sound of their machinery, dinners of puzzling variety, equipages, servants, every thing of the costliest and best to administer to their sensuous wants; but where are there any indications of a refined and generous liberality. The yearly stagnation of their incomes generates nothing but a noxious desire to have a higher chimney or a bigger mill than their neighbours." An opposite line of conduct is desirable amongst some masters, and would have been eminently conducive to the spread of an harmonizing spirit, in place

of that reckless independent animalism, which, in part, characterises the factory population. Generally speaking, good feelings have, of late, prevailed betwixt the principal employers and the operatives, as was most gratifyingly evinced on the occurrence of a splendid festival given by Messrs. Harrisons, to their work-people, at Stayley-mill, July 24th, 1838. This event was a highly creditable instance of well-directed liberality.

The number of houses in 1823, was about nine hundred; and in the years 1823-4, 1824-5, from seven to eight hundred new houses were built. In the course of 1827, 1828, 1829, and 1840, seven hundred dwellings were erected; and in 1831, upwards of one hundred and twenty were raised.—In the latter year, the town chiefly consisted of the streets extending from Stamford-street, or the New-road, to Grosvenor-street, comprising two thousand three hundred and fifty-seven inhabited houses. From 1833 to 1837 the town increased rapidly, and a number of new streets were formed, in both the Dukinfield and Hartshead portions, especially in the former, where the buildings extend partly on the side of Hough-Hill. In the above period, about four hundred houses were built. The number of houses in 1836, amounted to 2982; the number in the present year is estimated to be about 3100.

It is a principle in political economy, almost as unerring as the descent of water in physics, that population follows prosperous trade; and hence Stalybridge has increased within the last ninety-two years, from 140 to 21,000 souls.

In 1823, the population was 5500 ; in the course of the succeeding two years there was a most extraordinary increase, partially owing to the settlement of a considerable number of Irish families, who were attracted hither by the prospect of better wages than were to be obtained in their own country.—In 1825, the population appears to have been at least 9000.

In 1831, the first satisfactory census of the population within the police limits was taken. The following were its results :—persons, 14,216 ; males, 6625 ; females, 7591 ; inhabited houses, 2357 ; families, 2629 ; families employed in trade, 1949 ; in agriculture, 23 ; in other occupations, 657 (this is obviously too high a number) ; males upwards of twenty years of age, 2976 ; men employed as excavators, labourers, builders, &c., 1997.

In 1836, the condition of the people of Stalybridge was accurately ascertained by a statistical survey, effected at the instance of the Manchester Statistical Society. At that time the population was estimated at 17,200 ; the number of dwellings examined was 3313, of which 2587 were houses ; 670 sitting-rooms ; 56 cellars ; 29 old public-houses ; and 10 beer-shops. The number of persons inhabiting houses, was 12,345 ; rooms, 670 ; cellars, 56. The number of persons who could read and write, was 4484 ; read only, 4188. The heads of families belonging to the Church of England, were 769 ; lodgers of the same profession, 95. Heads of families of Dissenters, 917 ; lodgers of the same profession, 169. Heads of families of Catholics, 455 ; lodgers of the same

profession, 436. Heads of families not making any religious profession, 1174; lodgers of similar opinions, 588.—Ninety per cent. of the population were of the working class.

In the month of August, 1840, the Catholic population within the police limits of Stalybridge, amounted to 3665,* of whom 2184 were upwards of thirteen years of age.—The population, in 1841, was estimated to amount to from 20,000 to 21,000, forming an increase of about 7000 since 1831.

The Huddersfield Canal provides the town with the benefits of inland navigation; and it is to be hoped that a branch of the Manchester, Ashton-under-Lyne, and Sheffield Railway will be shortly extended to Stalybridge.

The places of public worship have nearly all been built during the present century. The old *Episcopal Chapel* was erected in 1776, by subscription; but being badly constructed, the walls gave way May 15th, 1778, and the present structure was shortly afterwards erected. It is dedicated to St. George; but, owing to the recent building of a new church, at a short distance to the west, this singular edifice has been entirely superseded as regards the celebration of divine service, but it is still occasionally used as an oratory for the adjacent burial ground. The old chapel being in the octagon form, its interior is remarkably light and elegant, and the elevated

* Communication of the Rev. J. F. Anderton.

site on which it stands renders the fabric a fine object when viewed from the vale of the Tame. The appearance of the chapel when the hill was clothed with wood, and when the few cottages of the village were scattered below amidst the exuberant foliage lining the river, would be picturesque. The interior is decorated by a marble tablet, erected and inscribed by the late F. D. Astley, Esq., "to the memory of the Rev. John Kenworthy, B. A., eleven years curate here, who died Aug. 10th, 1806, aged 34." Beneath this memorial are the annexed lines :—

" And we who boast of strength or thirst for power,
Or on whose brow fair science builds her throne,
Must bow before death's desolating hour,
And in the dust his ruthless empire own."

The new Chapel or Church of *St. George*, is situate to the west of Cocker-Hill. It was erected partly by a parliamentary grant and subscription, at a cost of £4500.* The foundation-stone was laid August 27th, 1838, by Thomas Preston, Esq., and the consecration took place June 24th, 1840. The living is a curacy, of the annual value of £143, in the patronage of the Rector of Ashton. The building is in the early decorated style of Gothic architecture, from the designs of Mr. Edmund Sharpe, and contains 1200 sittings, of which 500 are free.

St. Paul's Church is situate in the Stayley portion of Stalybridge, and was built by subscription, at a cost of £4100 : the site was presented by the Earl of Stam-

* Communication of the Rev. I. N. France.

ford and Warrington. The first stone was laid February 2nd, 1838, by Lord Combermere, and it was consecrated October 9th, 1839. The patronage of the curacy is in trustees.—This church is Gothic in the style of architecture, which prevailed towards the close of the thirteenth century. The architect was Mr. Richard Tattersall.—The number of seats is 1006, of which 360 are free.

St. John's Church, another recent erection, being situated in that part of the village of Dukinfield which adjoins the town of Stalybridge, it will be described in the article Dukinfield.

The *Catholics* have a chapel in the part of the town which is in Dukinfield. This edifice was commenced in June, 1838, and consecrated September 25th, 1839. It is dedicated to St. Peter, and was erected by subscription, at a cost of about £5000. The architecture is of the early lancet style, from the designs of Mr. M. A. Hadfield. The structure presents a handsome appearance, and contains an elegant window of stained glass, illustrative of the life of St. Peter.—The number of seats is 1400.

The *Methodist New Connexion* erected a chapel in Chapel-street, in the Hartshead part of the town, in 1802; but this was superseded by a neat and spacious chapel in Grosvenor-street, Dukinfield part, which was opened November 11th, 1832.

The *Wesleyan Methodists* had formerly a meeting-

room at Cocker-Hill. Their chapel in Caroline-street, Dukinfield part, was built 1805, re-edified 1815, enlarged 1829.

The *General Baptists* held meetings here in 1807. Their chapel in Rassbottom, Hartshead, built 1819, was superseded by the present edifice in Cross-street, Hartshead, erected 1828.

The *Particular Baptists* originally worshipped in a room near Castle-Hill, about 1813; subsequently they had two other rooms. Their present Chapel in Cross-Leach-street, Dukinfield-part, was built 1832.

The *Independents* opened a meeting-room in 1830; but in 1835, they erected an excellent chapel in King-street, Dukinfield part.

The *Primitive Methodists* commenced a Meeting-place previous to 1830. The chapel of this society is in Canal-street, Dukinfield part, and its date is 1833.

The *Stephenites* have a chapel, called Mount Zion, near Rossbottom, Hartshead, which they opened about 1835-6. This place of worship was built 1824, and once occupied by the Particular Baptists.

The *Local Government* of the place was entrusted, for a considerable time, to the constables of the respective townships wherein the town is situated.—A *Lock-up*, or small prison, was erected in the Hartshead portion in

1824.—The streets requiring due regulation and improvement, a public meeting of the inhabitants, held October 22nd, 1827, resolved to apply for an act of parliament, in order to enable the ratepayers to appoint Commissioners for the directing of the police affairs, &c. An act for these purposes was obtained May 9th, 1828, and provides that the ratepayers shall annually elect, on the first Wednesday in May, twenty-one ratepayers, who occupy premises of the yearly value of £50, to be Commissioners for cleansing, lighting, and regulating the town, erecting a Town-hall, providing a market, &c. These provisions have been complied with in a great measure.—The police force consists of two salaried and four other Constables, appointed by the Commissioners. The cost of the police for the year ending June 24th, 1840, was £556 5s. 8d.

A line drawn from the brook west of Ridge-hill, and extended over the Tame towards Stayley-mill, then diverging west to the foot of Dukinfield-Brow, and then north to where the brook below Throstle-Nest joins the Tame, will afford a tolerably good definition of the limits of the Stalybridge Police Act. A weekly Petit Sessions is held. An unsuccessful attempt was made, in 1832, to render Stalybridge a parliamentary borough.

This once obscure village was constituted a market town by the Police Act, and a *Market* was established weekly, on Fridays, on the 30th of December, 1831, in a spacious Market-House.—*Fairs* are held here on the last Monday in January, second Monday in June, and November 5th.

The principal public improvement effected in the town of late years has been the formation of a new road, from the Old Bridge to Thompson Cross, extending along the elevated bank immediately north of the narrow passage named Rossbottom. This new avenue is designated Stamford-street, and is joined by an improved line of road to Saddleworth. From the foot of the new road, the whole of the town is seen stretching across the valley, so that buildings, mills, and streets extend beneath the eye of the spectator. "The factories, when lighted, with the brilliant gaseous vapour of modern discovery, present, in the evenings of the winter months, a towering illumination, of the imposing grandeur of which it is difficult to convey an adequate idea." From this spot the various striking mansions of the manufacturers are seen to advantage, placed chiefly on gentle eminences, in the environs of the town. The principal modern seats are the following:—*The Abbey*, Abel Harrison, Esq.; *The Priory*, David Cheetham, Esq.; *Westwood-House*, John Cheetham, Esq.; *Staly Mount*, William Harrison, Esq.; *Cross-House*, David Harrison, Esq.; *Gorse-Hall*, John Leach, Esq.; and the mansions of Jeremiah Lees, Esq., John Lees, Esq., William Bayley, Esq., &c.

Numerous benefit societies, such as the Masonic body, Foresters, Druids, &c., and other associations, have been formed, in which provision is made for sickness and old age: these institutions are alike highly honourable to their founders and supporters.

The annual holiday termed a Wake, is held here

usually on the third Saturday in July, and several subsequent days. The amusements of this festival are becoming of a more rational nature than they formerly were, and yet sports of a brutalising tendency are prevalent.

The town is not possessed of an endowed *School*; but an Infant School was established in November, 1839, in the Temperance-Hall, by subscription, and payments from scholars. The number of boys and girls receiving tuition is 145.—There are *Sunday-Schools*, connected with the several places of worship, which are supported by voluntary contributions. The number of Sunday scholars here in 1823 was 1200; and the sum of £200 was subscribed for their support in 1824. A Sunday-School for Children of all Denominations was formed in 1815. The Wesleyan Methodists erected, in June, 1825, a Sunday-School, in Canal-street, at a cost of £890, calculated to accommodate 1200 children. The Methodist New Connexion School is spacious, built 1838. The Catholics have two schools: the average ages of their Sunday Scholars are from 11 to 17 years. The annual net outlay for Sunday-School education is about £450.—The subjoined tables exhibit the state of these Schools here:—

	1825.	1831.	1841.
Episcopal Schools	1	1	2
Dissenters „	4	5	7
Catholic „	0	0	2
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	5	6	11

	1825.	1831.	1841.
Scholars in Episcopal Schools	160	250	600
„ Dissenters „	1408	2375	2200
„ Catholic „	—	—	550
	—	—	—
	1568	2625	3350
	—	—	—

Notwithstanding the number and extent of the Sabbath-Schools, three-fourths of the children of the poor are destitute of efficient day-school education.

The Charitable Institutions of the place consist of Bible and Tract Societies, which are supported by the various religious bodies. The Rev. John Cape Atty devised the interest of £100, to be given in clothing to poor persons of Stalybridge, every Christmas-Day, by the minister and churchwardens of St. George's.

A Savings' Bank, for the purpose of enabling the industrious and provident to prepare for times of need, was established here in September, 1828. The sums received from depositors in the year ending November 20th, 1840, were £8632 15s. 10d.; and the sums withdrawn in the same period, were £5602 15s. 4d. The number of depositors was 822, and the amount of deposits was £24,115 10s. 2½d.

The *Town-Hall* and *Market-House* erected by the Police Commissioners, at the cost of the ratepayers, is a well-built edifice, in a disagreeable situation,—the basement story fronting Rassbottom, and the upper story

opening to Stamford-street; the entrance to the Hall is surmounted by massive pillars, and altogether that portion of the fabric is stately. The market contains ample and neatly arranged stalls for butchers, fish dealers, and fruiterers. The public-room and a gallery for the sale of general wares, are supported by twelve strong columns. This public building was commenced in June, 1830, and opened with great ceremony December 30, 1831.

That very necessary and beneficial establishment, the Fire-engine House, was erected in 1824, by subscription.

The "*Temperance Hall*," erected 1838, in the Dukinfield portion of the town, by subscription, at a cost of about £800, consists of a public room of 72 feet in length by 39 in width, used for temperance meetings, scientific lectures, and a school: half of the cost was contributed by the working class.

The "*Foresters' Hall*," also in the Dukinfield part of the place, built 1836, by the contributions of six lodges of Foresters, at an expense of about £2,200, is appropriated to the holding of Foresters' assemblies, public meetings, lectures, &c. The large room, which is provided with a gallery and organ, and decorated by a window of elegant stained glass, is 72 feet in length by 36 in width. A night school for the children of Foresters' is formed.

The *Stalybridge Mechanics' Institution* was established Sept. 7, 1825. It was at first styled "A Society

for Mutual Instruction," under which modest designation the germ of a literary and philosophical institution was discoverable ; a considerable stock of scientific apparatus was rapidly obtained ; classes for instruction in arithmetic, mathematics, music, geology, &c., were formed ; a reading-room has been opened in Queen-street, and a lecture-room in Shepley-street. The number of members in 1840 was 64, or only one in every 300 of the population.

A News-room, well provided with papers, was opened in 1825.—There is here a branch office of the Manchester and Liverpool District Bank.

In 1828-9, a Joint-stock Company was established to supply the town with gas ; the number of shares was 400, and their original value was £25 each. The company erected *Gas Works*, in Acre-lane, Dukinfield, in 1829. There are three gasometers ; and, in addition to lighting houses and shops, the company receive £400 per annum from the Commissioners of Police for lighting the street lamps.

In 1835, a Company was instituted by Act of Parliament for supplying the town of Stalybridge, and the village of Dukinfield with *Water* ; this association is in 600 shares of £20 each. A reservoir of five acres in extent has been excavated near Lyon-edge, in Dukinfield, and the works were completed October 1, 1840.

A short time prior to 1825, the old bridge was super-

seded by an excellent new one, erected at a cost of £4000, and approached on the Lancashire side by a new line of road.—A bridge entirely of iron was thrown across the river near the Town Hall about 1834. In 1831, there was a manufactory of fire bricks; formed of the argillaceous earth, on the banks of the Tame, near Cocker-hill. A petrified tree, the trunk about twelve feet in length, and ten or twelve inches in diameter, was discovered in a stone quarry, in March, 1831: it lay in the bed of a rock about thirty feet below the surface.

DUKINFIELD.

THE Township of Dukinfield is within the parish of Stockport, in the county palatine and diocese of Chester, the deanery and hundred of Macclesfield, in the representative division of North-east Cheshire,—the county division polling district of Mottram-en-Longdendale, and the magisterial division of Hyde.

This district is bounded by the river Tame on the north and west. The adjoining districts on the north are Ashton-under-Lyne and Hartshead; and on the west Audenshaw and Haughton: on the south it is partly separated by a brook from Newton; and on the east it is skirted by Matley and Stayley. The length of the township is about two miles and a half, and the breadth one mile. The number of computed statute acres is 1690.

The central and north-west portions of the township are occupied by the village of Dukinfield, and the north-east part contains the principal portion of the town of Stalybridge. The village of Dukinfield is within half-a-mile of both of the towns of Ashton and Stalybridge, and the buildings extend close to those of the two towns.

Dukinfield is supposed to derive its name from the

circumstance of the standard of the Danes having been captured here by the victorious Saxons. The figure of a raven or *doken* was impressed on the Danish flag, hence the spot was named, in the Anglo-Saxon dialect, *Dockenveldt*, or the field of the raven.

Iron-ore appears to have been smelted here in a remote age, as, in a field now called the "Burnt Earth," scoria of that metal has been found in large quantities, and some under the roots of old oak trees.—The Tame, in the time of the heptarchy, was the boundary of two kingdoms, which will account for the strong out-works of the Old Hall of Ashton, opposed by equally strong fortifications on this side. These were situated some where on the grounds now occupied by the Lodge; and the mansion of the Saxon proprietors, thus defended, stood on a place called the Hall Green. No traces of it remain but the name. The hall now called Dukinfield-Hall was erected in its stead, and the modern seat of the principal family, Dukinfield Lodge was built in the last century.—Aikin terms the place a barony; but it is a portion of the barony of Macclesfield.

At the earliest period to which records extend, this township was included in the fee of Dunham-Massey. The third Hamon de Massey confirmed Dukinfield to Matthew de Bromeale (Bramhall), about 1190. The family of Dukinfield seem to have held the place in fee of the Bramhalls.—Robert de Dokenfield, the first of his name on record, was living about 1160; his son Hamo's grandson, Robert, was owner here in 1315.

John de Dokenfield held *the manor* in 1401, of the lord Bromeale, by military service. His great grandson, John Dokenfield, married Katherine, daughter of Sir John de Assheton. Robert Dukinfield, Esq., fourth in descent from this John, died September 2nd, 1548; he held *the manor* from the king, in capite, by military service, at a rent of 11s. 8d. Robert, his grandson, died 1624, and was succeeded by Robert, his son; whose son, Robert, born about August, 1619, became a colonel in the service of the Parliament. During the civil wars, he opposed Prince Rupert, at Stockport, in May, 1644, and was High Sheriff of Cheshire in 1649; Governor of Chester in 1651; Member of Parliament for Chester in 1653; assisted in suppressing Sir George Booth's insurrection, 1659, and received £200 for his services on that occasion. He was tried, after the restoration, as one of the officers who sat at the trial of the Earl of Derby; but the result of the trial is not stated: he appears to have died before 1665. His eldest son and heir, Robert, who was created a baronet 1665, was living after 1713; and was followed by his son, Sir Chas. Dukinfield, Bart., whose son, Sir Wm., assumed the name Daniel, in addition to Dukinfield. He was High Sheriff of the county in 1751. After his death, the baronetage passed to Samuel, son of John, a son of Sir Robt. Samuel died issueless, 1768; and the title went to Nathaniel, son of Nathaniel, son of Robert. Nathaniel's eldest son, Sir John Lloyd Dukinfield, Bart., appears to be living. Sir William Dukinfield Daniel devised the estate of Dukinfield to his lady, Penelope, daughter of Henry Vernon, Esq. She conveyed the property, by marriage, to John Astley, Esq., a fellow-pupil with Sir

Joshua Reynolds in the art of painting. He was born at Wem, in Shropshire, in 1720, and acquired the possession of Dukinfield about 1767. His first lady died issueless. Mr. Astley was descended from the Astleys of Patshull, in Staffordshire, who are described by Sir Wm. Dugdale as "an ancient and honourable family," claiming to have sprung from Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester. Mr. Astley married secondly, Mary, daughter of Mr. Wagstaffe, surgeon, and died November 14th, 1787. His widow, a lady of considerable personal attractions, married secondly in 1793, William Robert Hay, Esq., who afterwards became the Rev. W. R. Hay, Vicar of Rochdale. The eldest son and heir of John Astley, Esq., Francis Dukinfield Astley, Esq., was born at Dukinfield-Lodge, July 17th, 1781, and succeeded to the estates in 1802. He served as High Sheriff of Cheshire in 1807. His father had greatly improved Dukinfield; but his efforts to contribute to the prosperity of the place were equal if not superior to those of his parent. He was a liberal promoter of the fine arts, particularly painting. His poetical talents were much superior to the standard of mediocrity in that line of composition. He printed a small volume of poems for private circulation, and a piece entitled "Varni-shando," which is a severe exposure of the tricks of low dealers in pictures. Several of the unpublished songs are full of rich humour and a racy pleasantry.—In his younger days, he was much attached to the sports of the field; and, for the purpose of occasional festive enjoyment, a building, named "Hunters' Tower," was erected in a high situation, on the eastern side of the township. This edifice was opened February

27th, 1807. Mr. Astley was highly distinguished for his good nature and kindness to all classes. He addressed the following poetical reply to a lady who wished him to leave the place of his birth to reside elsewhere, because his estate was situated in a manufacturing district:—

“Thou may’st say that this land is by commerce debas’d,
That its people, its manners, its customs are rude,—
Should the love then of home from the breast be eras’d,
Because our poor neighbours must toil for their food?”

Mr. Astley married in 1812, Susan, daughter of Roger Fyshe Palmer, Esq., and died suddenly July 23rd, 1825. He left a son, Francis Dukinfield Palmer Astley, who is yet a minor. The property is, at present, held in trust by Thomas Gisbourne and Samuel Ashton, Esqrs.—William Astley, Esq., a natural son of the late Mr. Astley, resided at Dukinfield-Lodge several years.

It is remarkable, that this valuable domain has, since the earliest records, always passed by hereditary descent, or by will. Dr. Hibbert relates a singular adventure to have occurred to one of the Dukinfields:—A tenant’s boy, on the death of his father, was driving an only cow to *the manor* house of Dukinfield. He was met by the lord of the place, with whose person and rank he was unacquainted, who questioned him whither he was taking the beast. “I am driving it as far as Dukinfield for the heriot,” replied the boy; “My father is dead,—we are many children,—and have no cow but this,—don’t you think the devil will take Sir Robert for a heriot when he dies?” The lad was fortunately addressing a humane landlord. “Return home,” said the baronet, “take the

cow back to thy mother; I know Sir Robert,—I am going to Dukinfield myself, and I will make the matter up with him.”

Dukinfield Old Hall was originally built in the Norman era; but the gabled front and frogged pinnacles of the present edifice denote it to be a structure of the reign of Henry VIII. The building was formerly large, of quadrangular form, the walls of timber and plaster, surrounded by a moat, which is even yet partly remaining. This house continued to be the abode of the Dukinfields till the last century. In 1794, they were spoken of with much respect by the aged inhabitants. The hall is now become a dilapidated dwelling.—A domestic chapel anciently adjoined the mansion. This chapel is noticed elsewhere.

Dukinfield-Lodge is a modern house, delightfully situated on a woody eminence, overlooking the Tame,—in front is a terrace, alongside a precipitous rocky slope, which is clothed with shrubs; adjacent is a large grove, penetrated by several retired walks. The beauties of the place have given rise to a poem, by Mr. William Hampson, published in 1793. He thus sketches the scenery of this spot:—

“ Where, trickling down the moss-grown mountain’s side,
From dripping rocks the murm’ring waters glide,
Springs o’er their bosoms in soft eddies creep,
Commix their rills, and with each other weep;
There Tame supplies his urn, and down below,
As the vale slopes, his current gives to flow,
Till soon arriving, Hunclyffe’s rocks to lave,
In rude cascades descends the broken wave.

There up the steep, with native oak o'ergrown,
Frowns the dark fir-tree, on the rugged stone ;
A lighter green the poplar leaves o'erspread,
And, ting'd more lightly, bends the larch's head."

The mansion was erected by John Astley Esq., but the design has not been fully executed. The most interesting room is octagon in form ; it is decorated by stained glass, and here was a portion of the valuable collection of pictures acquired by the two Astleys, father and son, the former of whom was an eminent artist. The lodge is, at present, occupied by Charles Hindley, Esq., M.P.

An *Episcopal Chapel* was erected adjacent to the Old Hall, by John de Dokenfield, to whom it was licensed as a private oratory in 1398. The succeeding edifice of the chapel is yet remaining, but in a state of decay and neglect. The architecture indicates it to have been built in the reign of Henry VII. This small place of worship forms a wing of the Old Hall, and does not appear to have been otherwise than domestic, although it is included by Sir Peter Leycester, amongst the chapels of ease in Stockport Parish, and is inserted as such in the present official catalogue.* After the Reformation of the Church it is probable its episcopal jurisdiction was never renewed ; yet the Dukinfields continued its use for family devotion, and appointed their own chaplains, until Col. Dukinfield and his successor promoted the prevalence of dissent. Here were buried some of the later branches of the local family, whose tomb-stones, with perfect inscriptions, were remaining in 1793.† None of these relics are now visible.

* Leycester's Cheshire : Ormerod's ditto. † Aikin's Manchester.

A new *Episcopal Chapel*, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, was founded on the 27th of August, 1838, by Lord Viscount Combermere, with much ceremony. This recent erection is situate on a commanding eminence, in the part of Dukinfield adjoining Stalybridge, and was consecrated May 24th, 1841. The living is a curacy, in the patronage of the Rector of Stockport. The number of seats is 1200, of which 605 are free. The edifice is plain but neat, and its cost about £4000, was defrayed by parliamentary grant and subscriptions.

The eminent founder of the Quakers, George Fox, is conjectured to have first commenced his itinerant preachings at Dukinfield, in 1647. (Fox's Diary, v. 1, p. 97.) The house in which early meetings of the Friends were held was standing in 1825.

Colonel Dukinfield having become acquainted with Samuel Eaton, a popular preacher of the *Presbyterians* at Chester, he induced him to settle at Dukinfield, in 1650, where he formed a society shortly afterwards. Eaton wrote a work entitled "The Mystery of God Incarnate." Tradition can yet point out the place, in a neighbouring wood, where, on days set apart, under the watch of sentinels, and at night-fall, when they were less likely to be observed, the proscribed presbyterian ministers were met by their faithful adherents; when the pious service of prayer, praise, and exhortation, had no other walls to surround it than the oaken thicket, and no other roof for its protection but the canopy of heaven.* Imme-

* Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature, vol. 18, p. 681; vol. 20, p. 518.

diately after the passing of the Act of Toleration, in 1689, an outhouse of the Rev. Samuel Angier, who resided in Dukinfield, on an estate called "Angiers Tenement," was converted into a Presbyterian meeting-house, and licensed under the Toleration Act. Mr. Angier became the minister, and the Dukinfield family were members of his congregation. By the contributions of Sir Robert Dukinfield and other principal members of the society, a chapel, well known as the "Old Chapel," was erected in 1707, as appeared by an inscription over the southern entrance. A vestry and an organ-gallery were erected, and the cemetery enlarged a few years ago, principally by the liberality of F. D. Astley, Esq., who conveyed the premises to trustees in perpetuity. It is said that the Rev. W. R. Hay, late Vicar of Rochdale, endeavoured in vain to render this chapel episcopal, and was not very scrupulous in the means which he took in attempting to effect his object. Several families of the first respectability in the neighbourhood are members of the congregation. In 1838, a subscription fund for the re-erection of the chapel was formed; and on the 26th of June, 1839, the first stone of the present structure was laid by Samuel Ashton, Esq., of Pole Bank. The re-opening took place August 26th, 1840. The minister's stipend partly arises from a freehold estate of about thirty-three statute acres, which was the gift of Mr. James Heywood, in 1714, to the pastors of the chapel. A curious register is extant in the hand-writing of the Rev. Samuel Angier; it contains numerous notices of remarkable events which occurred in his time. He is commemorated by a beautiful Latin inscription, on a tomb in the chapel-yard, and died

November 8th, 1713. His successor in the ministry was the Rev. William Buckley, a highly respected and virtuous man, who in a MS. note described his congregation to consist of the following classes.—“baronet, 1; esquire, 1; gentlemen, 12; tradesmen, 16; yeomen, 76; late comers, labourers, servants, &c., 687—793, votes for members for the county, 96.” Mr. Buckley was minister nearly forty years, and died May 26th, 1752. At a subsequent period, his only son, the Rev. William Buckley, held the ministry about twenty-nine years, with great credit. He died April 29th, 1797. The present minister is the Rev. R. Brook Aspland, M. A. The Old Chapel was an ordinary edifice. The present structure is a massive and rather incomplete specimen of the early English style of architecture; its plan is cruciform, and the interior is much admired. The cost of re-erection was about £4000. The architect was R. Tattersall, Esq., of Manchester. The number of seats is 977, of which 194 are free. On the east side of the cemetery is a mausoleum, erected in 1826, to the memory of F. D. Astley, Esq. It is elegantly constructed, and exceeds 14 feet in height; the cost was about £280. The chapel is decorated by monuments commemorating John Astley, Esq., and William Hampson, Esq. The latter died November 18th, 1834. He possessed creditable literary attainments, and was an active magistrate. The only remaining memorial of the Dukinfields is a tomb of William Dukinfield, of Castle-hill, Esq. (See Stalybridge.) There are inscriptions recording Thomas Harrison, of Stalybridge, Esq., died September 6th 1820; and John Lees, also of Stalybridge, Esq., died August 25th, 1824. The situation of this interesting

place of worship is upon a commanding eminence, forming the highest part of the village, and rendering the chapel a striking object from various parts of the vale of the Tame. The prospect from Chapel-hill overlooks a pleasing and populous country.

The *United Brethren*, or *Moravians*, formed a small society here in 1743 ; but their meeting-house was not completed till 1751, and the choir houses in 1757. The chapel was built at the sole expense of Mr. William Walker ; and a donation of half the cost of the original edifice was made by Mr. Barham. The chapel was enlarged in 1774, by the liberality of Mr. Walker. The adjacent buildings were then inhabited by an industrious orderly society of Moravians ; but, owing to misunderstandings with Mr. Astley, respecting the leasing of the premises, the principal part of the sect erected the village of Fairfield, near Manchester, to which they removed in 1785. The Rev. Benjamin La Trobe, a most amiable and excellent religious writer, was once the minister here. He died, November 29th, 1786. There is still a society of Moravians at Dukinfield.

The *Calvinists'* chapel, named Providence, was erected by the Independents, in 1806 ; but, in 1820, it was first occupied by a society of Secessionists from the Church of Scotland. The building is now a Calvinists' chapel.

The *Independents* have a chapel near Dukinfield Hall, erected in 1839.

The *New Connexion Methodists* built a small place of worship in Town-lane, in 1835; but on the 17th of April, 1840, the first stone of their handsome chapel, named Bethesda, was laid. The style of its architecture is early English, and its extent is 81 feet in length by 51 feet in width. The estimated cost was £2000, defrayed by subscriptions.

The *Catholics* have a neat chapel near Astley-street. The erection was commenced in March, 1825, and the opening occurred in November following. It is of the Grecian order, and the dedication is to St. Marie.

The *Wesleyan Methodists'* chapel is a small edifice, erected in 1836.

The *Primitive Methodists'* possess a diminutive place of worship, raised in 1836.

The *Local Government* of this populous township is partly entrusted to four constables, nominated by the rate-payers, and appointed at the Court Leet for the Macclesfield Hundred, and partly to a constable appointed by the Magistrates of the Hyde division. The magisterial constable receives a salary of £50 per annum from Dukinfield, and he acts for Dukinfield and Newton. He is appointed pursuant to the Cheshire Constabulary Act, which took effect in 1831. The expenditure for police purposes during 1840-1 was £68. About four years ago, efforts were made to introduce here the provisions of the general lighting and watching act; but these attempts

failed. The shops and mills are partially lighted by the Ashton and Stalybridge Gas Companies; and water is supplied by the Dukinfield and Stalybridge Water Works Company. (See Stalybridge.)

The transition of Dukinfield from a retired woody agricultural district to a populous town-like manufacturing village, has been wrought in the course of sixty years, owing, in a great measure, to the establishment of cotton-manufactories. The ample supply of fuel and the abundance of water, combined with the improvements effected by John Astley, Esq., in the erection of a large Iron Foundry, and of the houses called the Circus; in building two bridges over the Tame, one at Stalybridge, and the other near the Lodge; repairing the roads, rearing an Inn, and forming a reservoir, rendered the place a prosperous village in the latter part of the last century. Two cotton-mills were erected a short time prior to 1794. There were four of these manufactories in 1814; six in 1818; and seven in 1825; at present there are eleven cotton-mills, possessed by seven firms; these estimates relate to Dukinfield proper, considered apart from Stalybridge. Two of these manufactories employ about 2700 hands, the total number of cotton-mill hands in Dukinfield is about 5000. The early cotton-mills of this place appear to have been ill-regulated, and disagreeable workshops, for Dr. Aikin remarks in 1794, that the pernicious practice of working the mills night and day prevailed, so that the constitutions of the workers were debilitated, the growth of many retarded, and the rate of mortality alarmingly increased. Happily for the present genera-

tion the factory system has been materially improved of late years, as regards due consideration for the health of the workers, but unhappily their pecuniary means are not often judiciously used.

The district is much benefitted by the Peak Forest and Huddersfield Canals; and further improved by the Manchester and Sheffield Railway, which passes near Dukinfield Hall, a distance of three quarters of a mile from the centre of the village. The increase of inhabited houses in Dukinfield from 1821 to 1831, was 1688; the increase from 1831 to 1841 was 1517. These estimates include Stalybridge.

The *Lakes* is a retired agreeable abode of Mr. Taylor. The mansions of the Lees and (late) Davis families, bordering *Hall Green*, are neat residences. The house erected by Charles Hindley, Esq., M.P., in the vale of the Tame, is now occupied by the Rev. Joseph Taylor, A. M. *Early Banks Wood* is a singular and solitary dwelling on the side of Hough Hill.

The number of families in Dukinfield, inclusive of part of Stalybridge, in 1794, was 252, and of persons, about 1134. In 1801, the population was 1737. In 1811, the inhabited houses were 497; families, 502; houses building, 1; uninhabited, 25: families in agriculture, 16; in trade, 405: males, 1476; females, 1577; persons, 3053. In 1821, the inhabited houses were 777; families, 873, houses building, 42; houses uninhabited 16: families in agriculture, 85 (this is obviously inconsistent

with fact); families in trade, 369 (this is clearly erroneous as compared with 1811): males, 2517; females, 2579: persons, 5096. In 1831, the inhabited houses were 2465; families, 2690; houses building, 68; families in agriculture, 88 (this is too high a number); families in trade, 1446 (this is about 1000 deficient in accuracy): males, 6939; females, 7742; persons, 14,681: forming an increase of 9585 in ten years. In 1836, the state of Dukinfield was statistically investigated. The population of the place, considered separately from Stalybridge, was estimated in that year at 8600; the number of dwellings examined was 1690, of which 1434 were houses, 224 sitting rooms, 32 cellars; the proportion who could read and write was 2380, read only 2112. The heads of families belonging to the Church of England, were 415, lodgers of the same opinions 94; heads of families of Dissenters 545, lodgers of same opinions 99; heads of families of Catholics 50, lodgers of same opinions 46; heads of families without any religious professions 680, lodgers of same opinions 269. In 1841 the inhabited houses in the entire township, amounted to 3982; uninhabited houses, 431; houses building, 26. The average number of inmates to each house is $5\frac{3}{5}$; the total of persons is 22,385, indicating an increase of 7704, during the last ten years. The present population of Dukinfield exclusive of the portion included in Stalybridge is upwards of 10,000. The value of all the property in the township, was assessed in 1815, at £9859 per annum; in 1840-1, £48,300.

“The length of life must formerly have been remarkable here, if we may judge by the following complaint of

shortness of days, in an epitaph on a person aged seventy-one, buried in the Old Chapel yard :

All ye that do behold this stone,
Pray think how *quickly* I was gone ;
Make haste, repent, no time delay,
Lest Death *as soon* snatch you away."

In the latter part of the seventeenth century a well conducted school existed here, under the superintendence of a Mr. Barlow ; a few years subsequently a *school* was erected near the Old Chapel, this institution flourished very much, particularly during the mastership of *Domini* Gee, whose son's widow was living in the village in 1823, at the age of 101 ; about seventy years ago, the school was taken down, to give the chapel all the advantages of its peculiarly fine situation. In 1810 a spacious and well-built *Sunday School*, named Dukinfield School, was erected by subscription, in connection with the Old Chapel, and this still remains the principal Sunday School in the township, it is decorated by a portrait of the Rev. Thomas Barnes, D. D. Sunday Schools are also attached to the other places of worship ; that of the Independents at Furnace-hill was built in 1825. The Dissenters educate about 1700 Sunday scholars, and the Catholics 300. Dukinfield is in the Ashton-under-Lyne poor-law Union ; the gross amount of Poor's Rate levied in 1839, was £1103 17s. 3d. 1840, £1549 0s. 10d. In 1702, Dr. Daniel Wilde, devised £50, for the relief of poor aged persons, the interest is applied by the feoffees in gifts of small sums to the aged poor. In 1708, an unknown person left £5 for the same purpose. The Independents and Moravians have Bible Societies.

The *Village Library* is a most excellent institution, established in 1833, and consisting of a Library of about 1100 volumes, which are supplied to members for the low charge of one penny per week, the number of contributors is 158, chiefly of the operative class; it is much to be wished that its advantages were fully appreciated.

The Land is principally good pasture and meadow, the manure is chiefly lime, with marl on the lighter grounds; the average rent of farm land is about £3 10s. per acre. Dukinfield is rich in mineral treasures, that yield a considerable revenue. Iron ore has been found rather plentifully, and seems to have been smelted at a remote period. Coal is abundant, for there are fifty separate beds or veins, the greatest portion of them workable. Aikin says the coal-pits are from 60 to 105 yards in depth, according to the bearing of the strata. One of the present pits is 350 yards in depth: there are now seven collieries, employing about 150 men and boys. The stone of Harrop Edge quarry is tolerably excellent. A superior clay convertible into fire-bricks has been met with. A petrified tree has been discovered in Newton Brook.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

THE towns of Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge, and Dukinfield, appear to extend over a space of about 1400 statute acres. They contain the following places of worship :—

	Ashton.	Stalybridge.	Dukinfield.	Total.
Episcopal..	2	2	1	5
Dissenters..	8	7	7	22
Catholic ..	0	1	1	2
	—	—	—	—
	10	10	9	29
	—	—	—	—

The parish of Ashton contains Episcopal Churches and Chapels 5, Dissenters 18.

The number of Cotton-mills is as follows :—

Ashton.	Stalybridge.	Dukinfield.	Total.
33	32	11	76

The parish of Ashton contains 82 Cotton-manufactories.

The number of Cotton-mill workers is :—

Ashton.	Stalybridge.	Dukinfield.	Total.
7000	9000	5000	21,000

In the parish of Ashton 12,000.—The population of the three towns may be thus compared :—

	Ashton.	Stalybridge.	Dukinfield.	Total.
1831..	14,670 ..	14,216 ..	7,000 ..	28,886
1841..	22,686*..	20,000 ..	10,000 ..	52,686

* The population of Ashton parish, of Dukinfield, and part of Staley, is 71,728.

A highly interesting statistical inquiry into the population of Ashton, Stalybridge, and Dukinfield, was made in 1835-6, when the aggregate population was estimated at 47,800; the number of dwellings examined was 8838, of which 6170 were houses, 1521 sitting-rooms, 147 cellars, 105 public-houses, 124 beer-houses: the number of persons inhabiting houses was 33,845; rooms, 1521; cellars, 147: the number of persons able to read and write, was 11,587; only able to read, 10,634. The heads of families who professed to belong to the Church of England, were 2701, and lodgers of similar opinions, 212: heads of families professing to be Dissenters, 2086, and lodgers of similar opinions, 407: heads of families professing to be Catholics, 904, and lodgers of similar opinions 772: heads of families not making any religious profession, 3147, and lodgers of similar opinions, 1441.

The state of the Sunday Schools in 1841, will appear from the following tables:—

	Ashton.	Stalybridge.	Dukinfield.	Total.
Episcopal . .	2	2	1	5
Dissenters . .	6	7	7	20
Catholic . . .	0	2	1	3
	<hr/> 8	<hr/> 11	<hr/> 9	<hr/> 28
Episcopal Scholars	2400	600	100	3100
Dissenters' „	2275	2200	1700	6175
Catholic „	—	550	300	850
	<hr/> 4675	<hr/> 3350	<hr/> 2100	<hr/> 10,125

The number of Sunday-Schools in Ashton parish, is 29: total of Scholars, 10,031.

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ADDITIONS.

- Page 72.—John Buckley, Esq., qualified as a Magistrate July 5, 1841.
 „ 78.—Nicholas Earle, Esq., is Mayor of Ashton, for 1841-2.
 „ 92.—The Manchester, Ashton-under-Lyne, and Sheffield Railway was opened from Manchester to the vicinity of Ashton-under-Lyne, Dukinfield, and Hyde, November 17th, 1841.
 „ 95.—According to a recent investigation of Ashton town, by that active agent of the Temperance Society, Mr. W. H. Buchanan, of Ashton, there were in September, 1841, in Ashton, 13 liquor-vaults, 67 public-houses, and 96 beer-shops.
 „ 105.—County Rate for 1841, £3702 17s. 10d.
 „ 167.—Old Chapel damaged by storm, January 7th, 1839.

CORRECTIONS.

- Page 65, line 12,—for Posethwaite read Poslethwaite.
 „ 89, „ 8,— „ 400,000 „ 700,000.
 „ 167, „ 21,— „ 26th June „ 6th June.

Mss. Additions.

Dr. Hebleats, Work p. 33.

The book is noticed in the Manchester Guardian of Jan. 1822.

Little's Customs of a Manor in the North of England
during the 15th Century. 1460. pp 58. Edinb. 1822.

Read before the Society of Scotch Antiquaries and
printed in their Transactions for 1822.

✓ Hexas says that the local practice is based on the
Customs noticed in a book in his possession
relative to a general leasing of the tenements
in Apleton under Henry at Marston mas, 1. H. 6.

To the Gray is added an Appendix
containing.

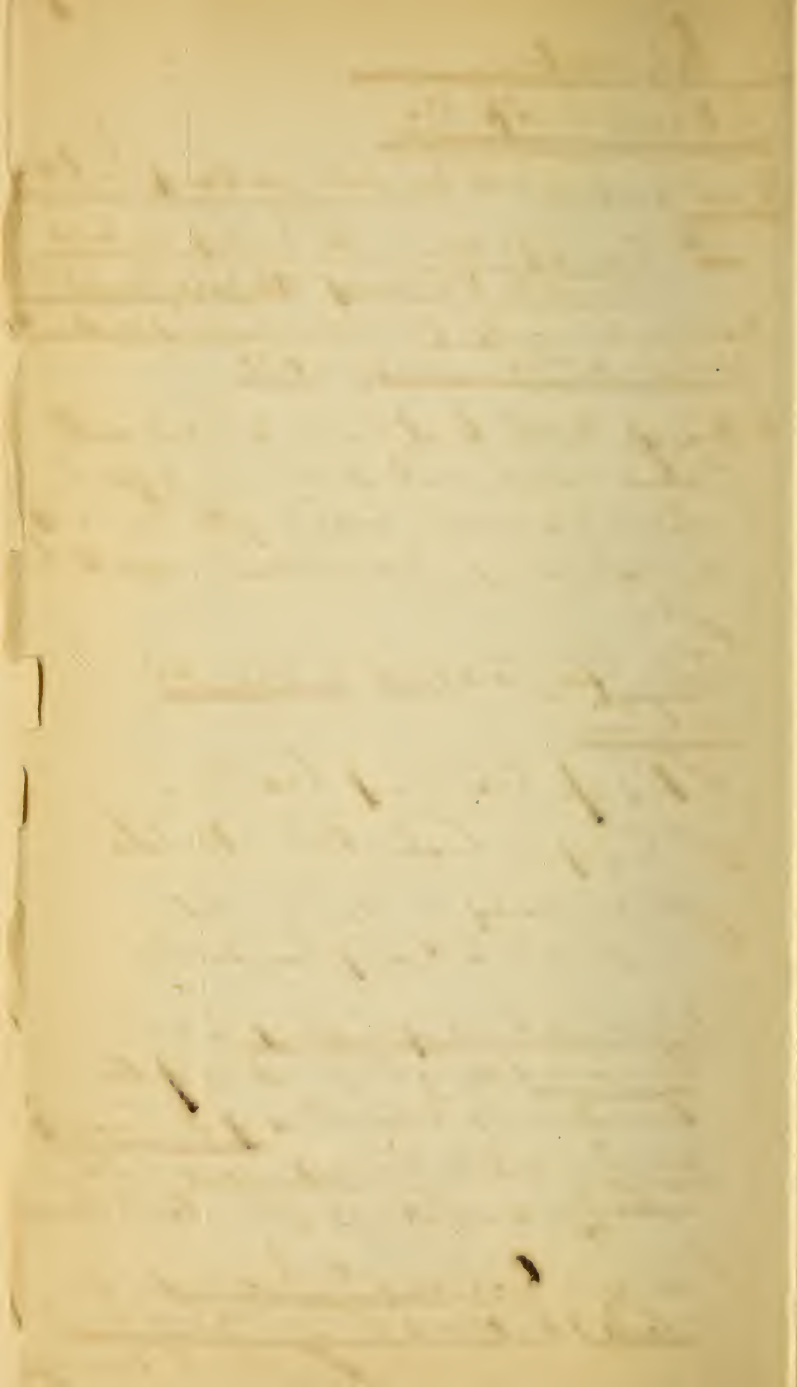
✓ P. d. of. Apleton of Apleton.

✓ Copy of the Custom Roll & Rentals.

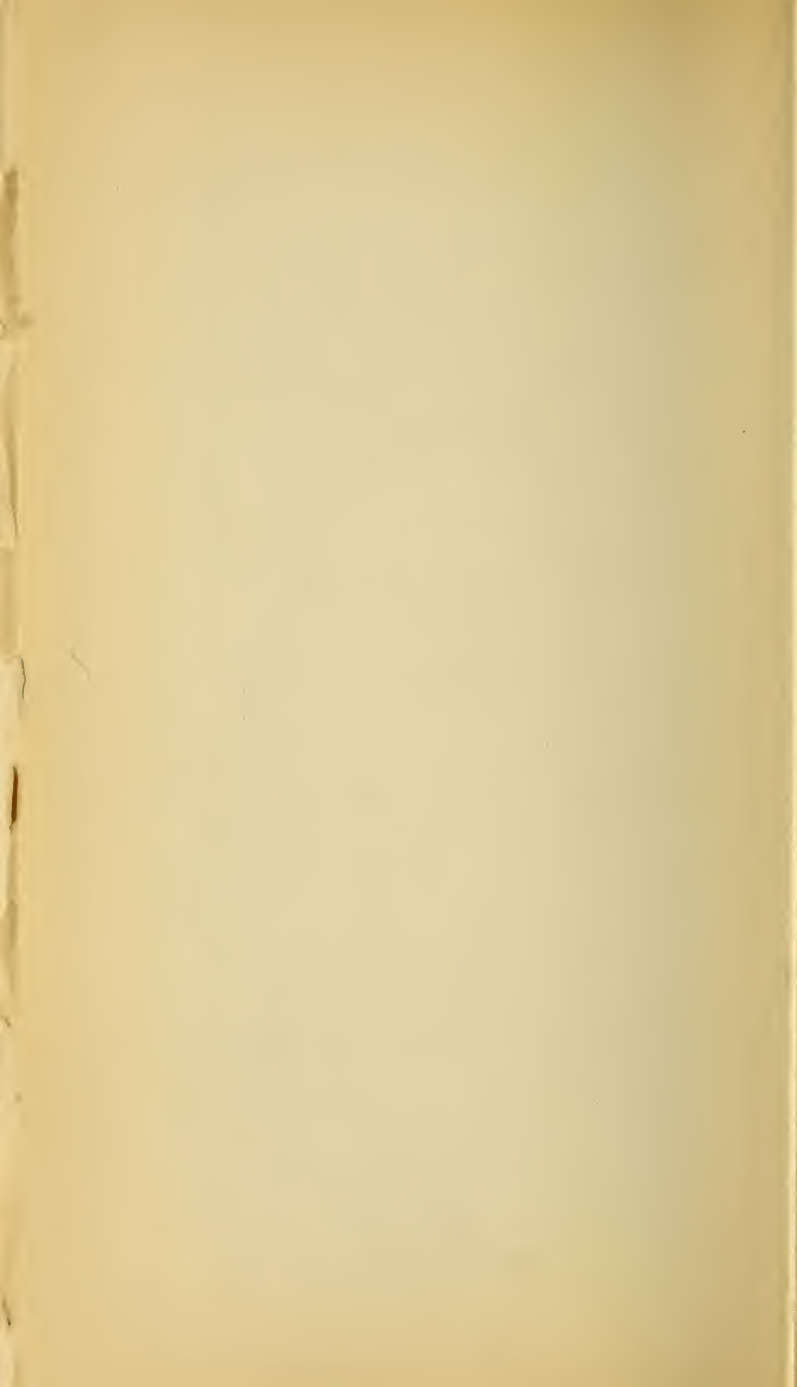
✓ and extract of the Acc. printed
in Ashmole's Next of Manchester.

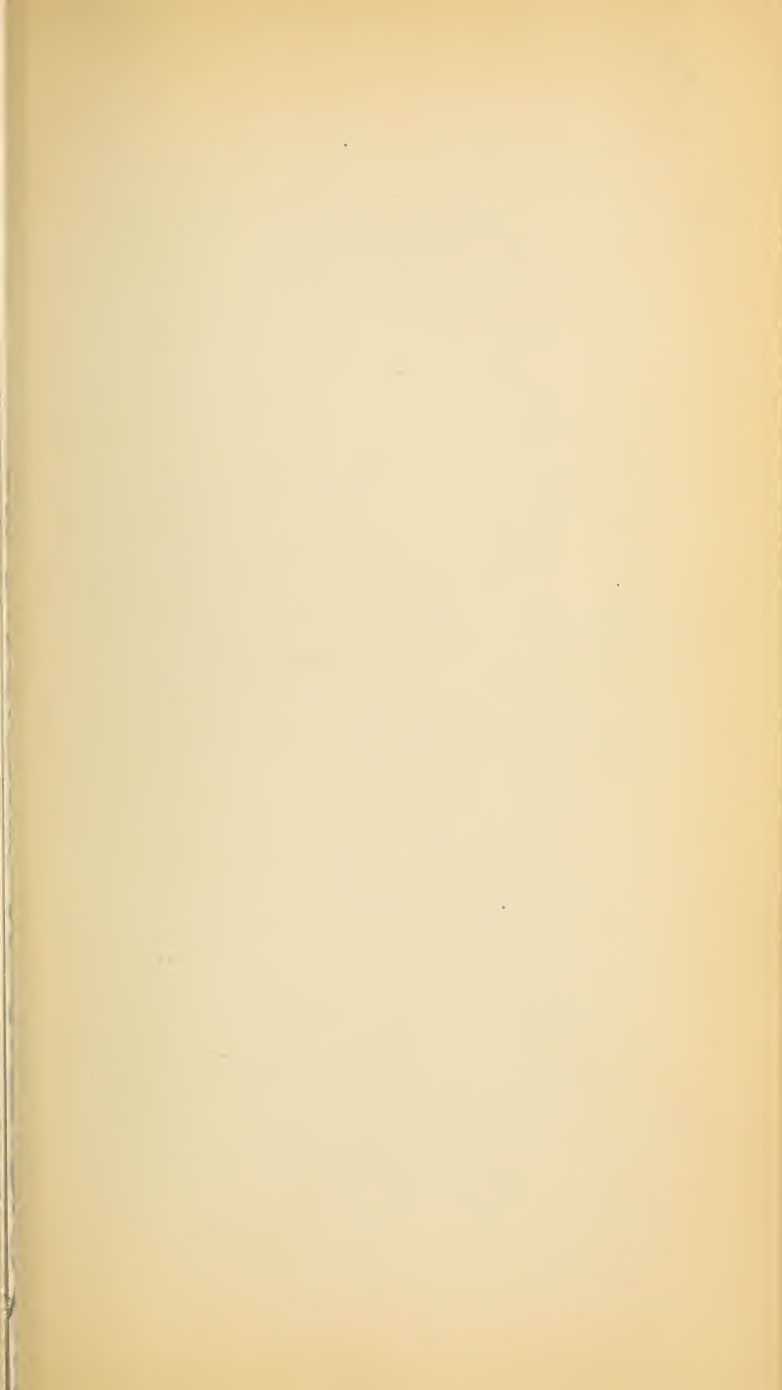
✓ In the Lords Book of Customs is an
Ordinance settling the precedence of the
several wives & daughters of the tenants
at will - and the Womens Seats on the
common form & or settlements of the Parish Church.

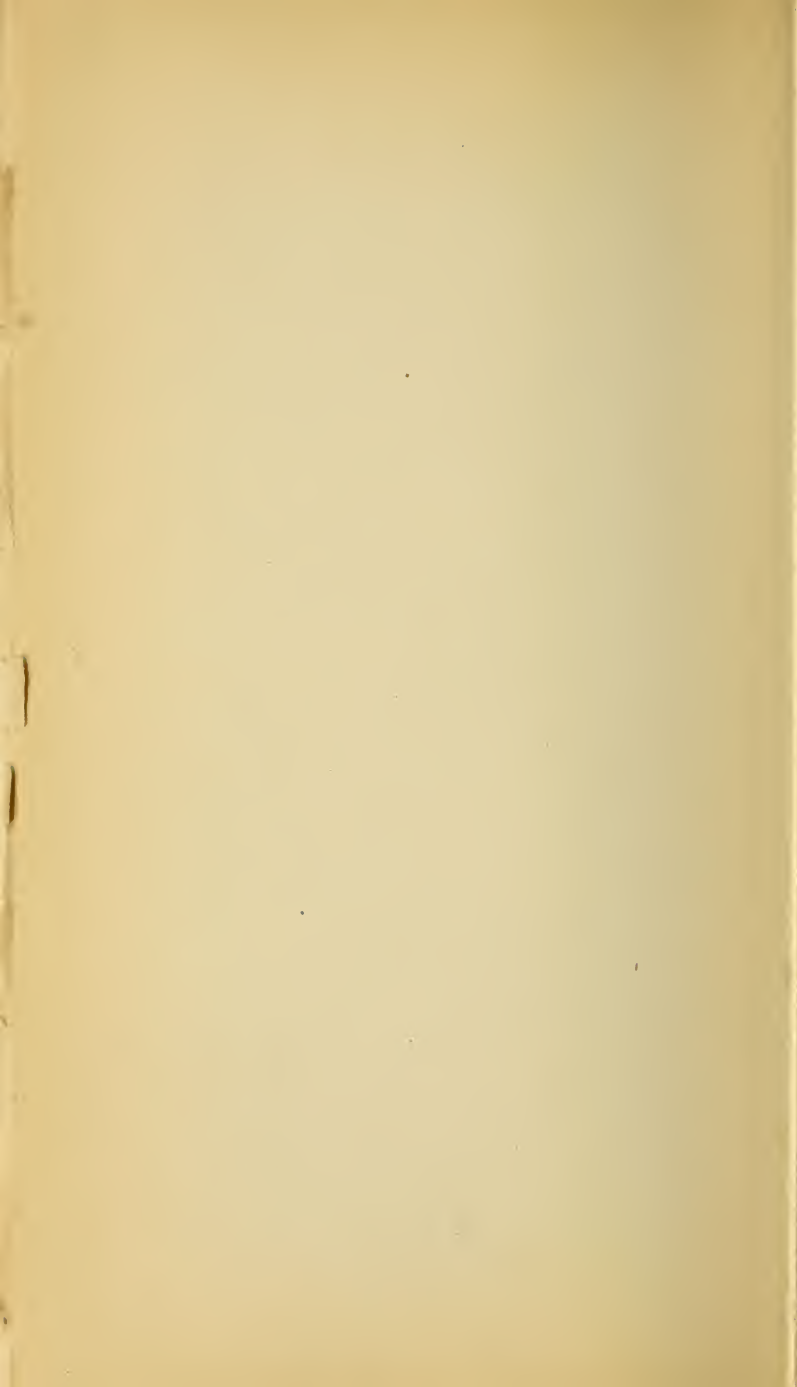
✓ Also a Diagram of the positions on the
Seats & the names of those who had Seats
Geo. Pomeroy.

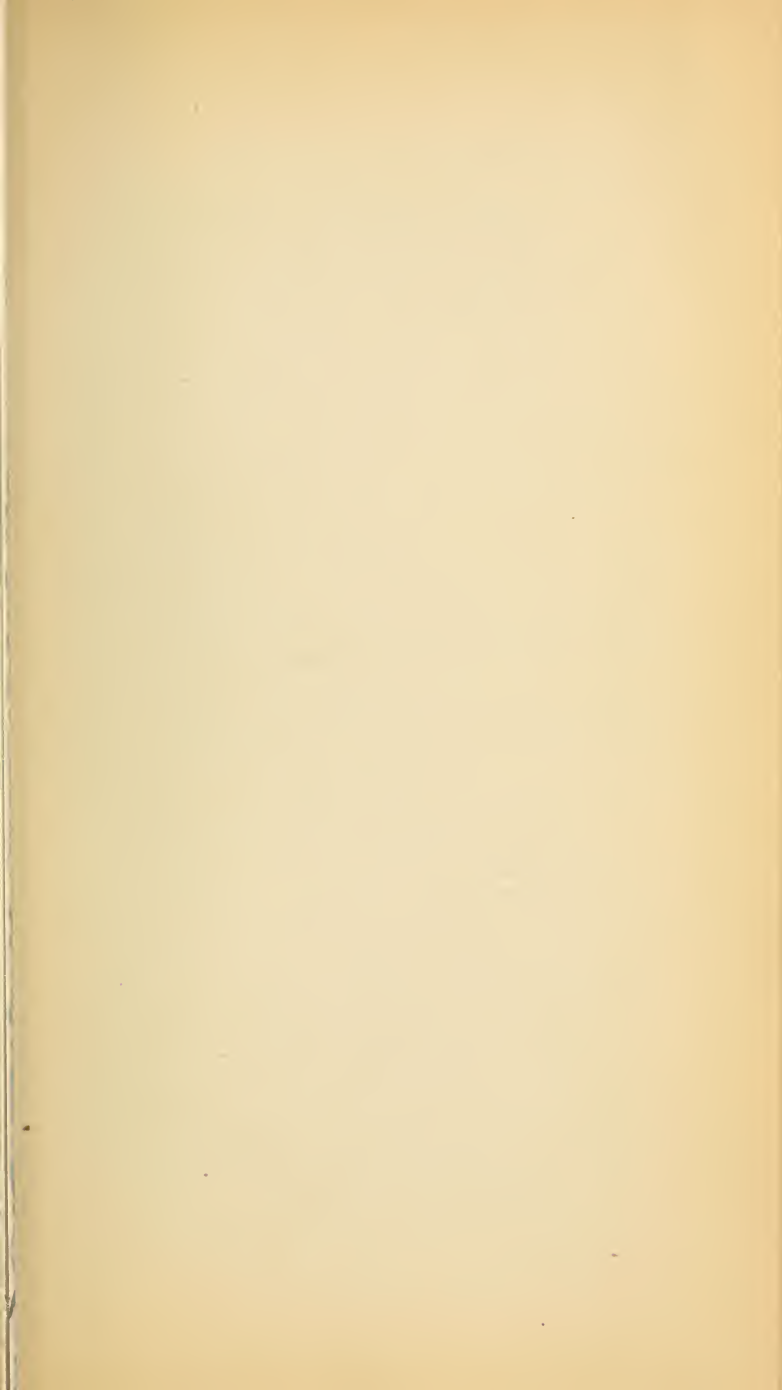


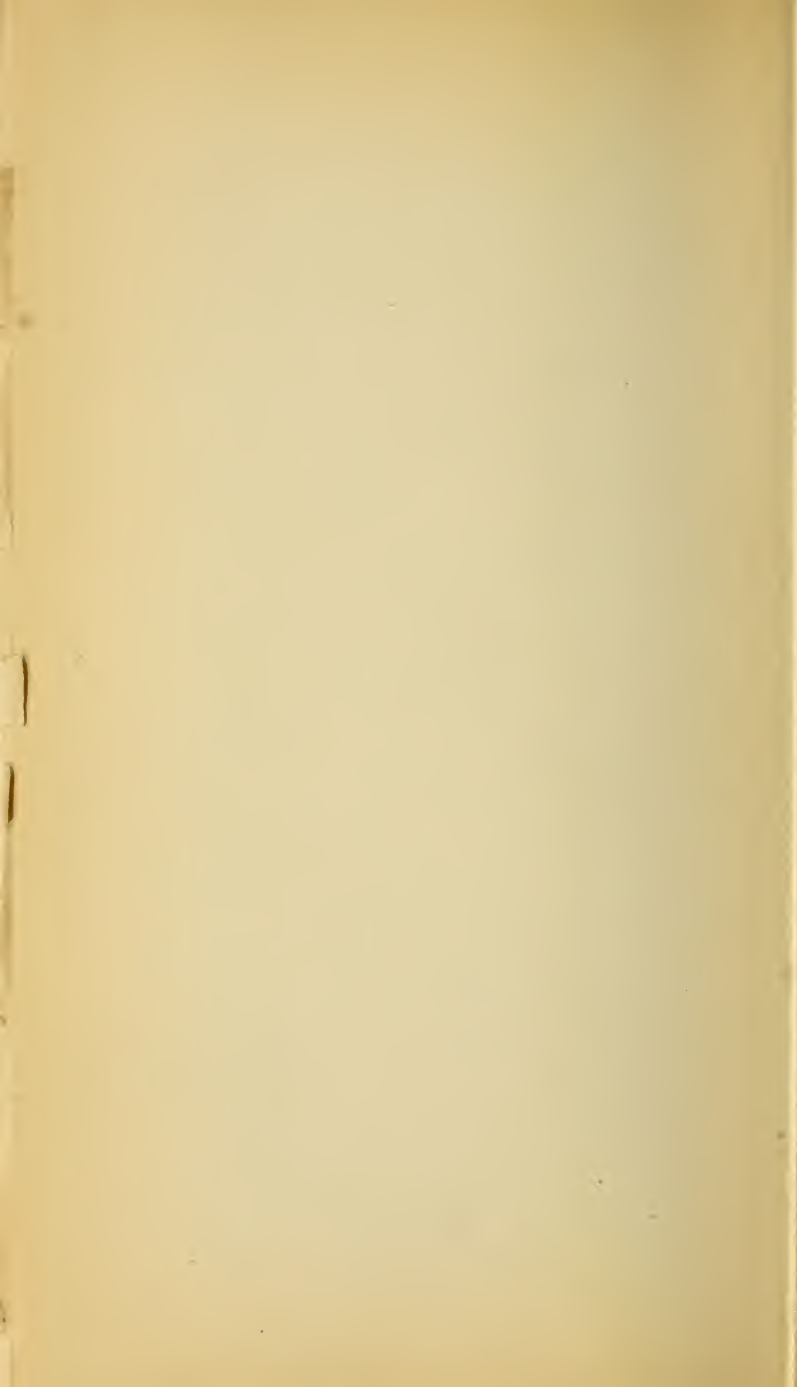


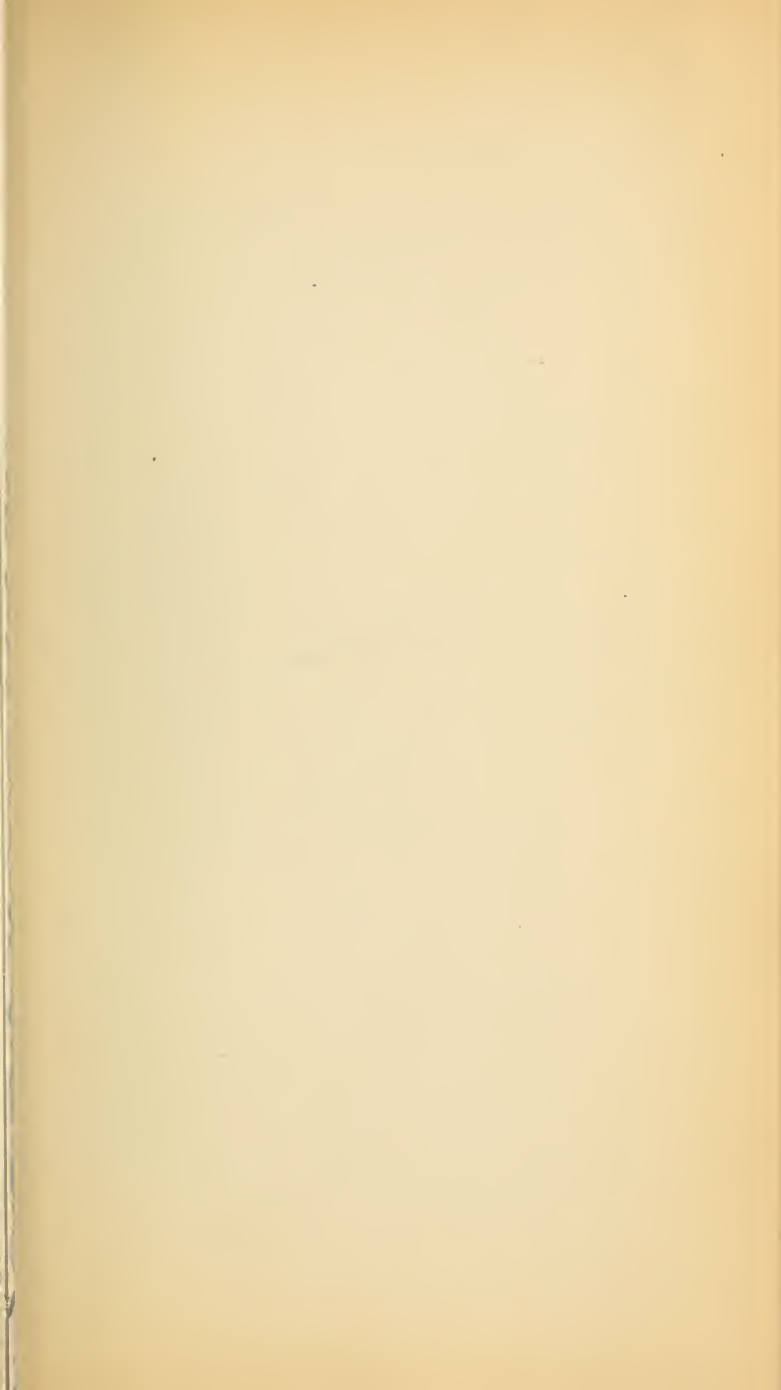


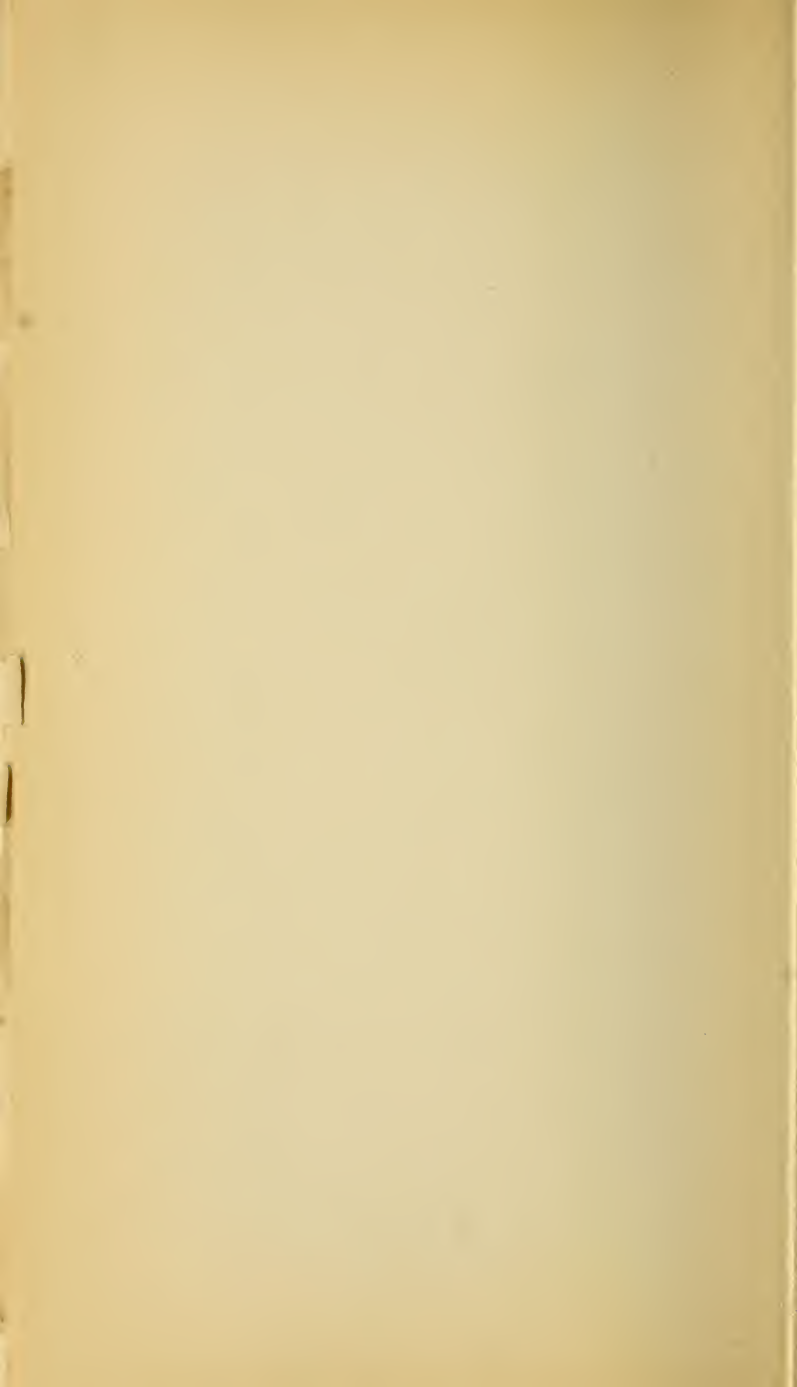


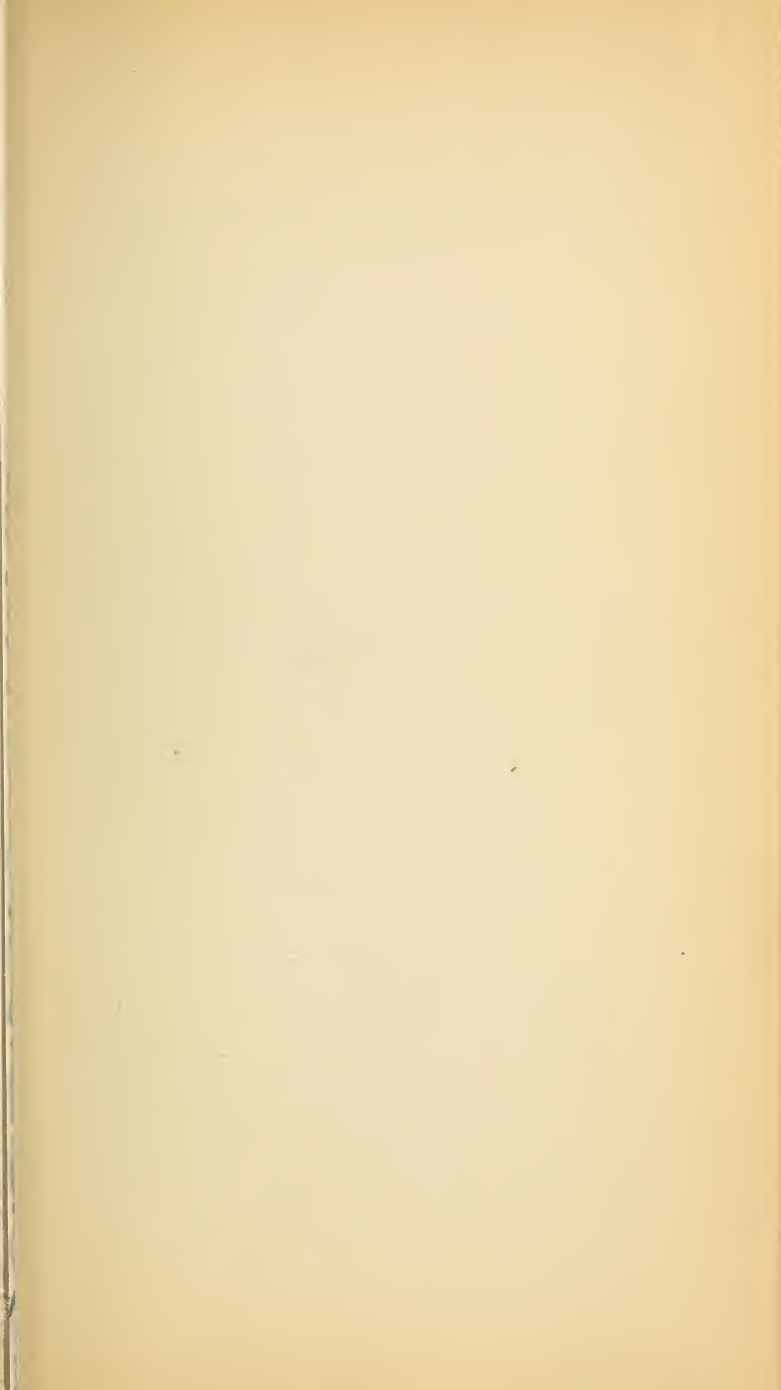


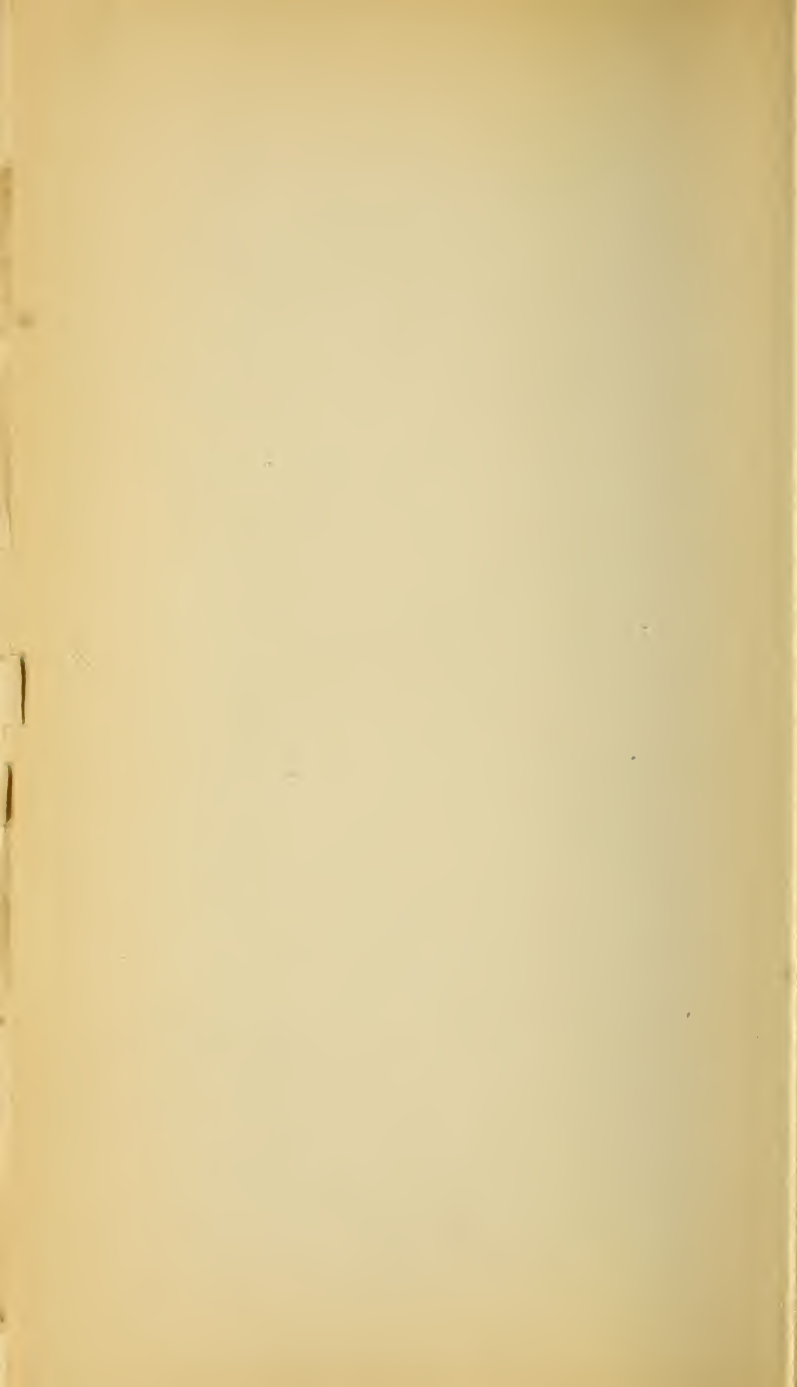


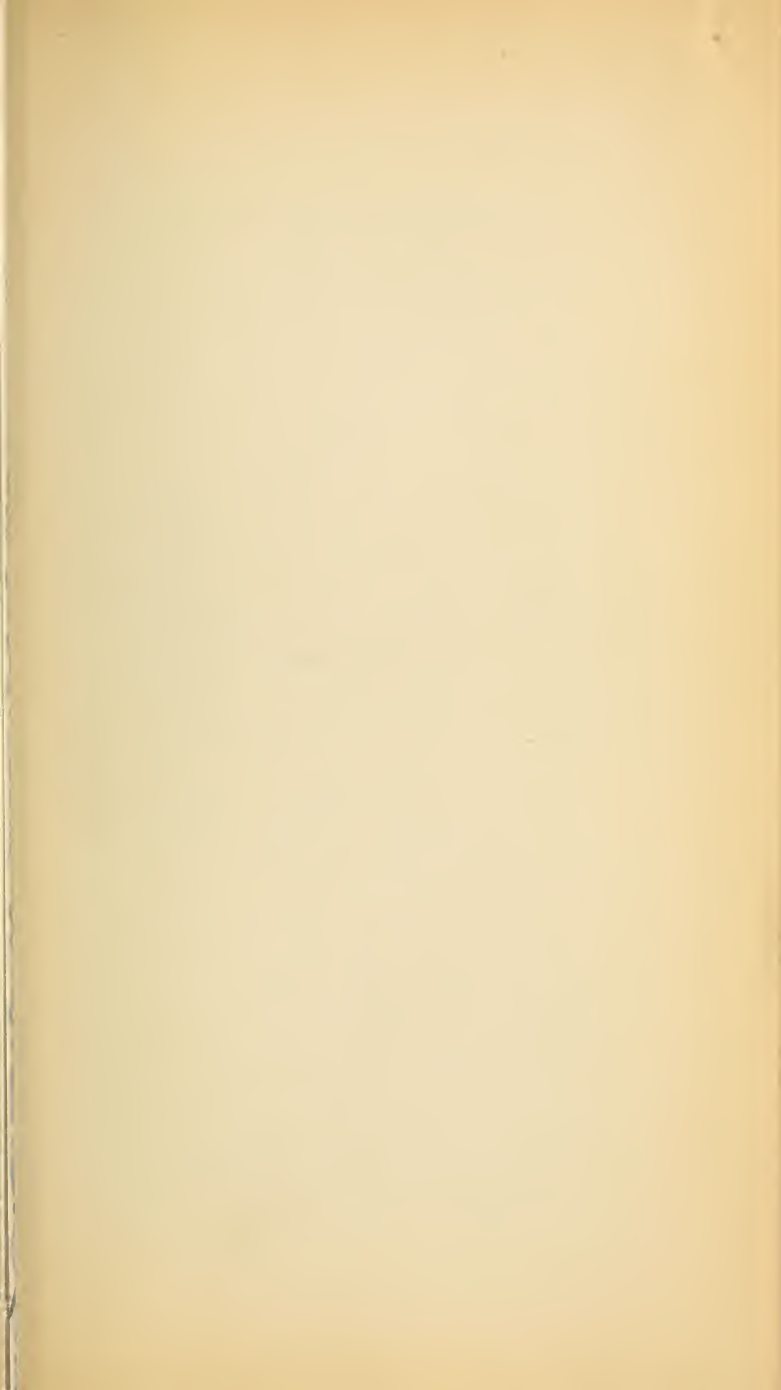


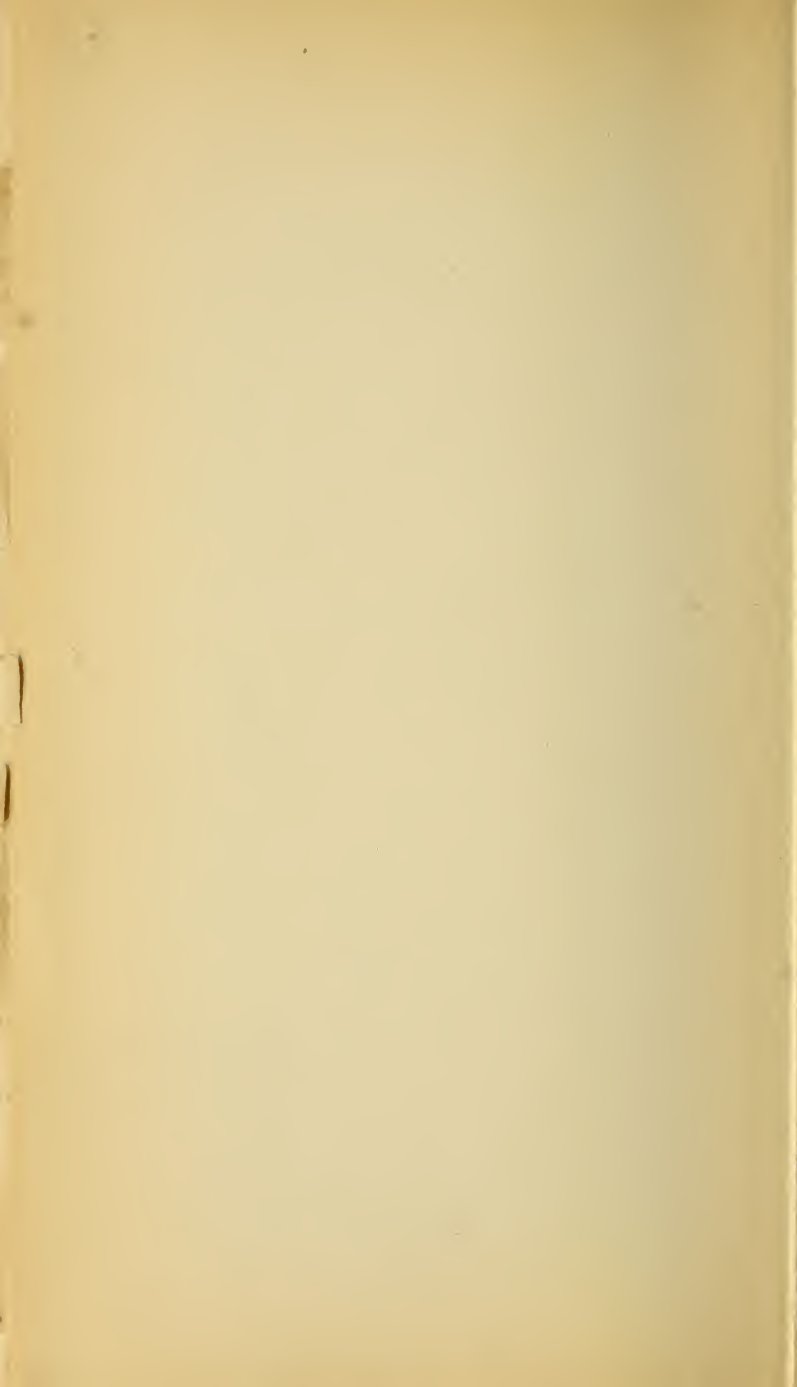


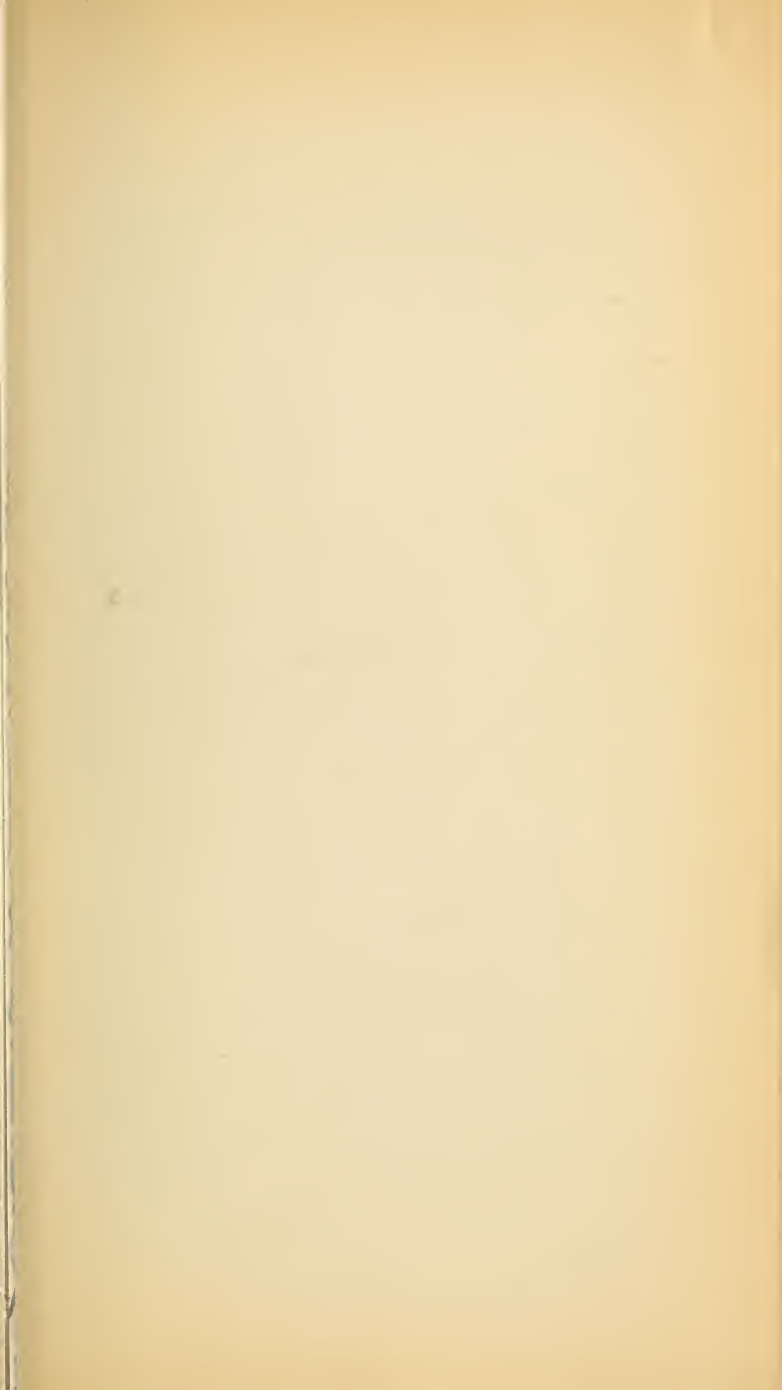


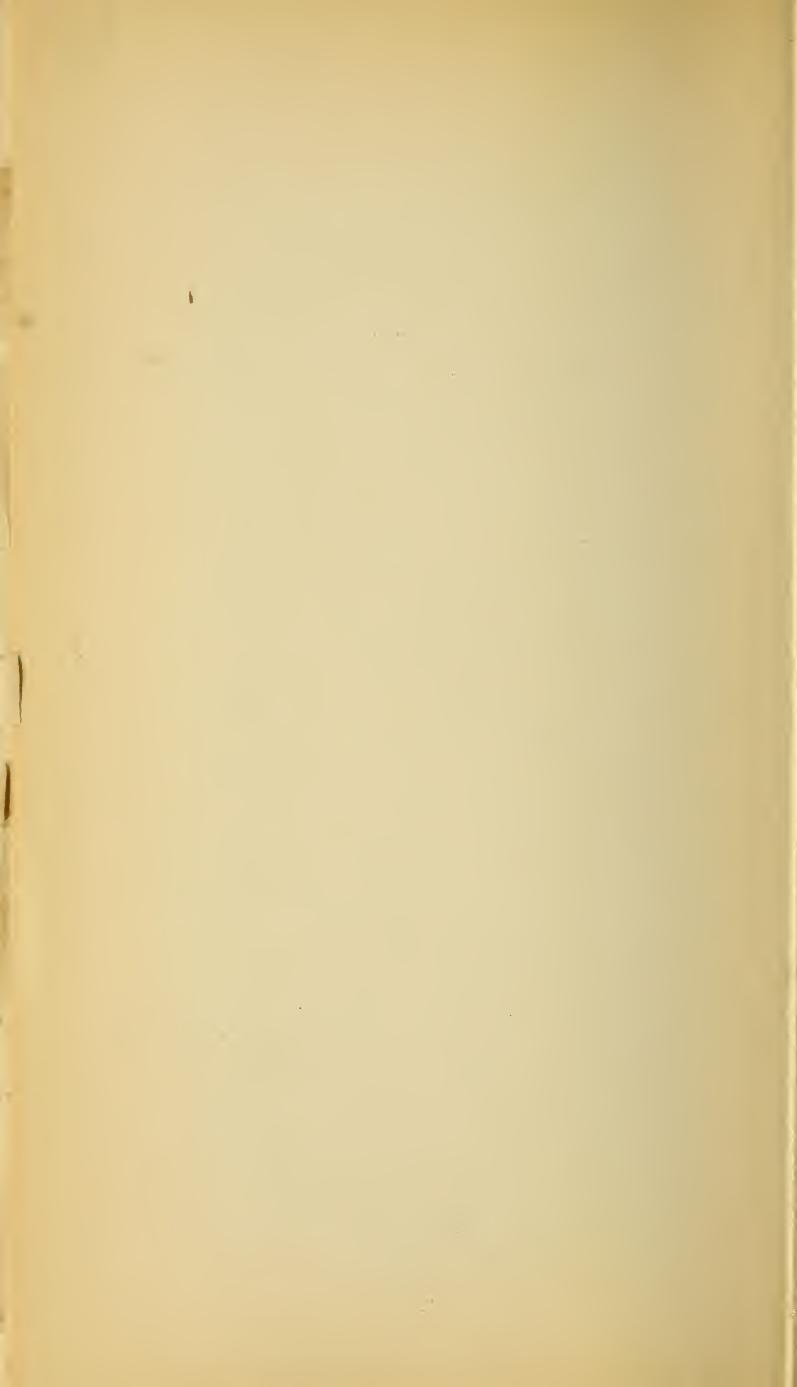


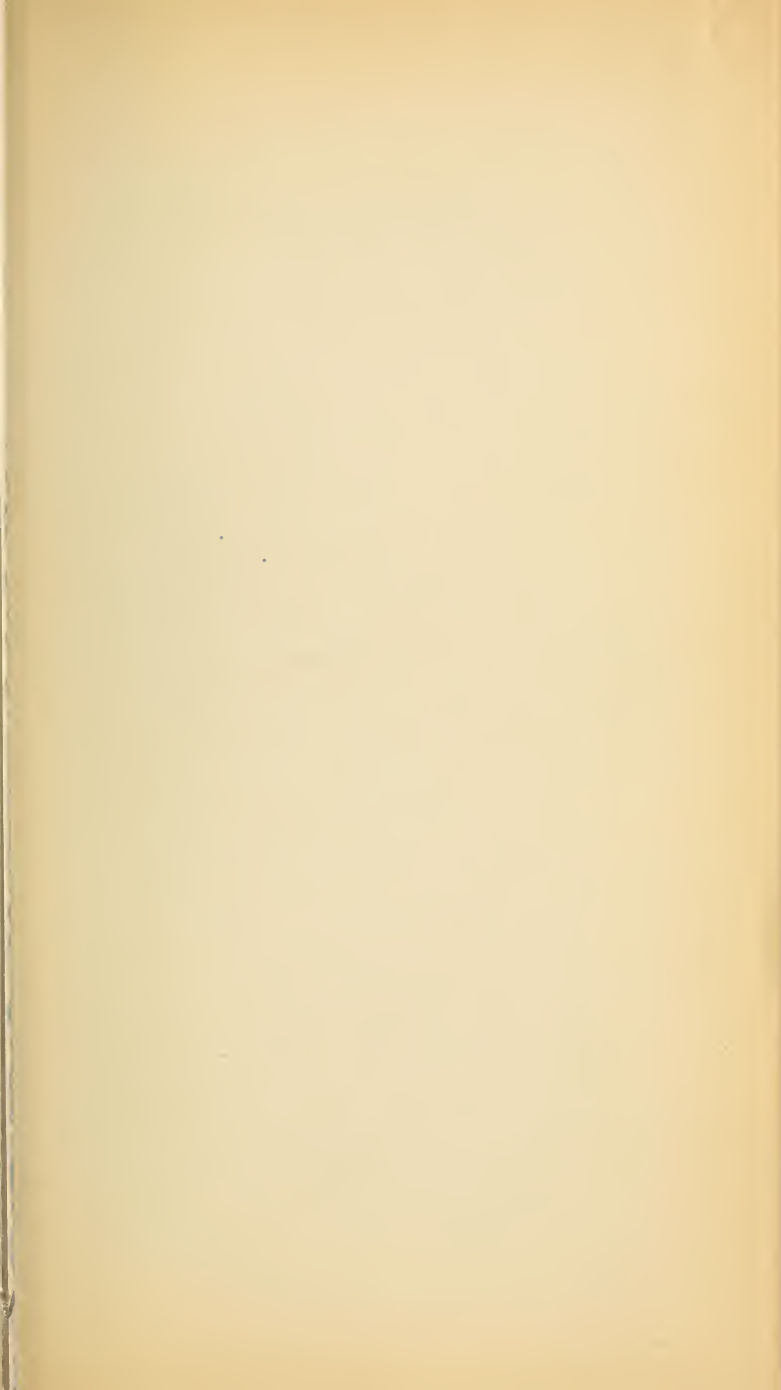


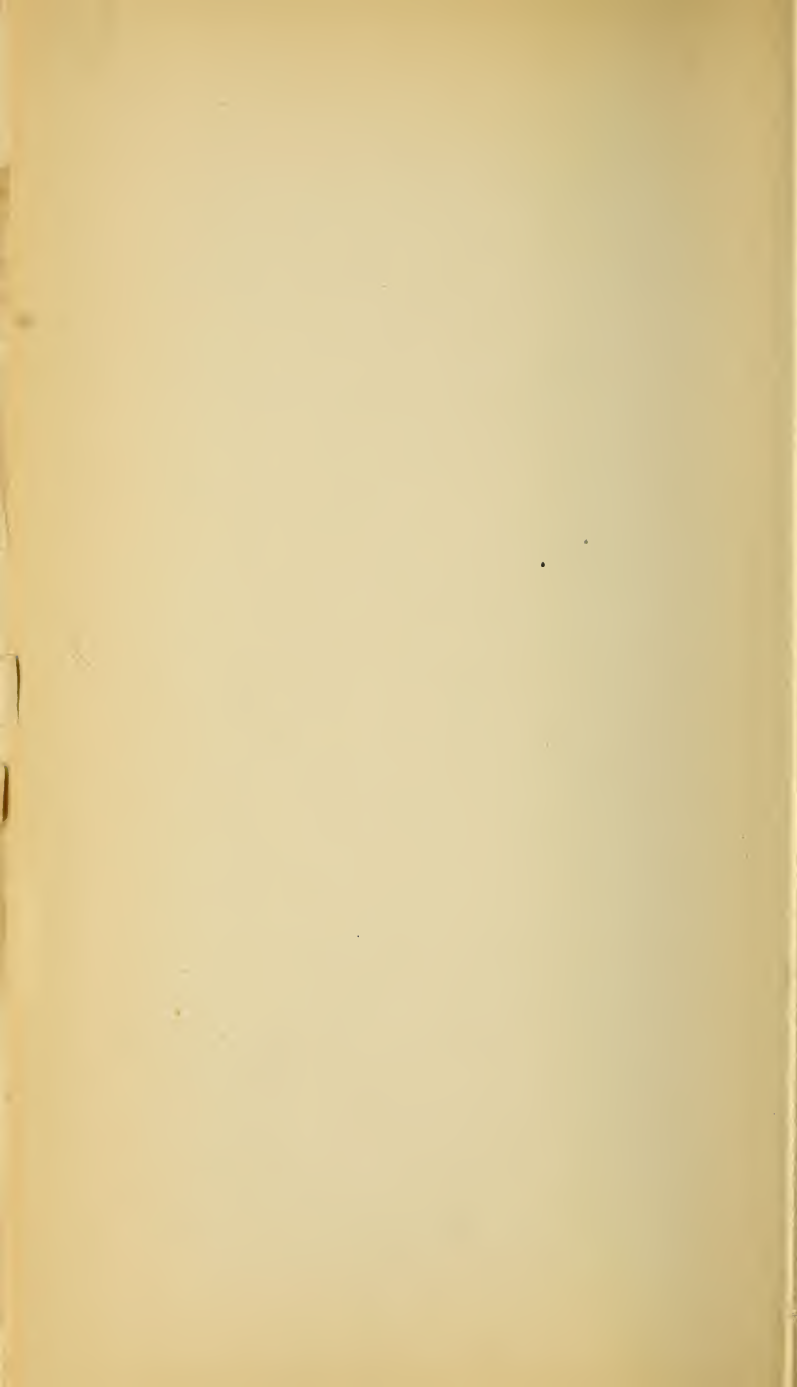


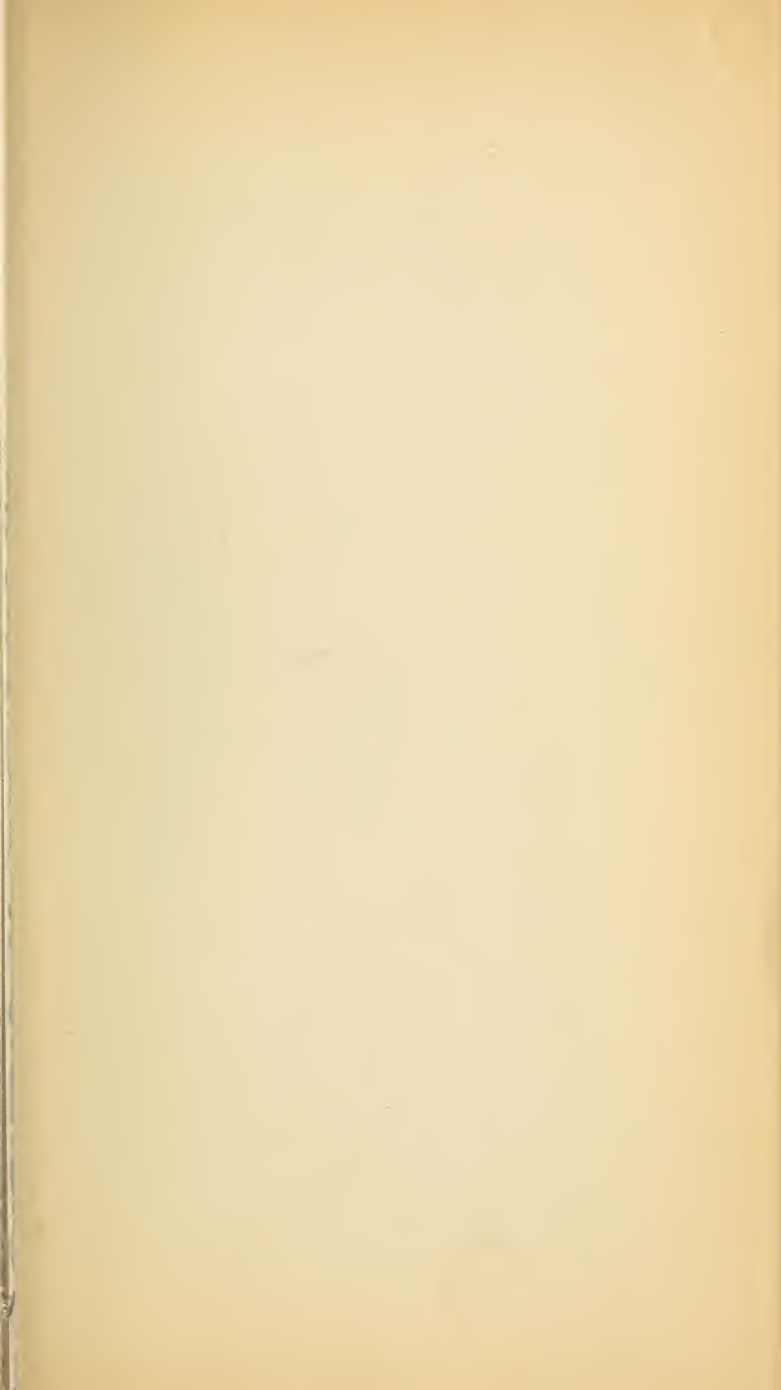


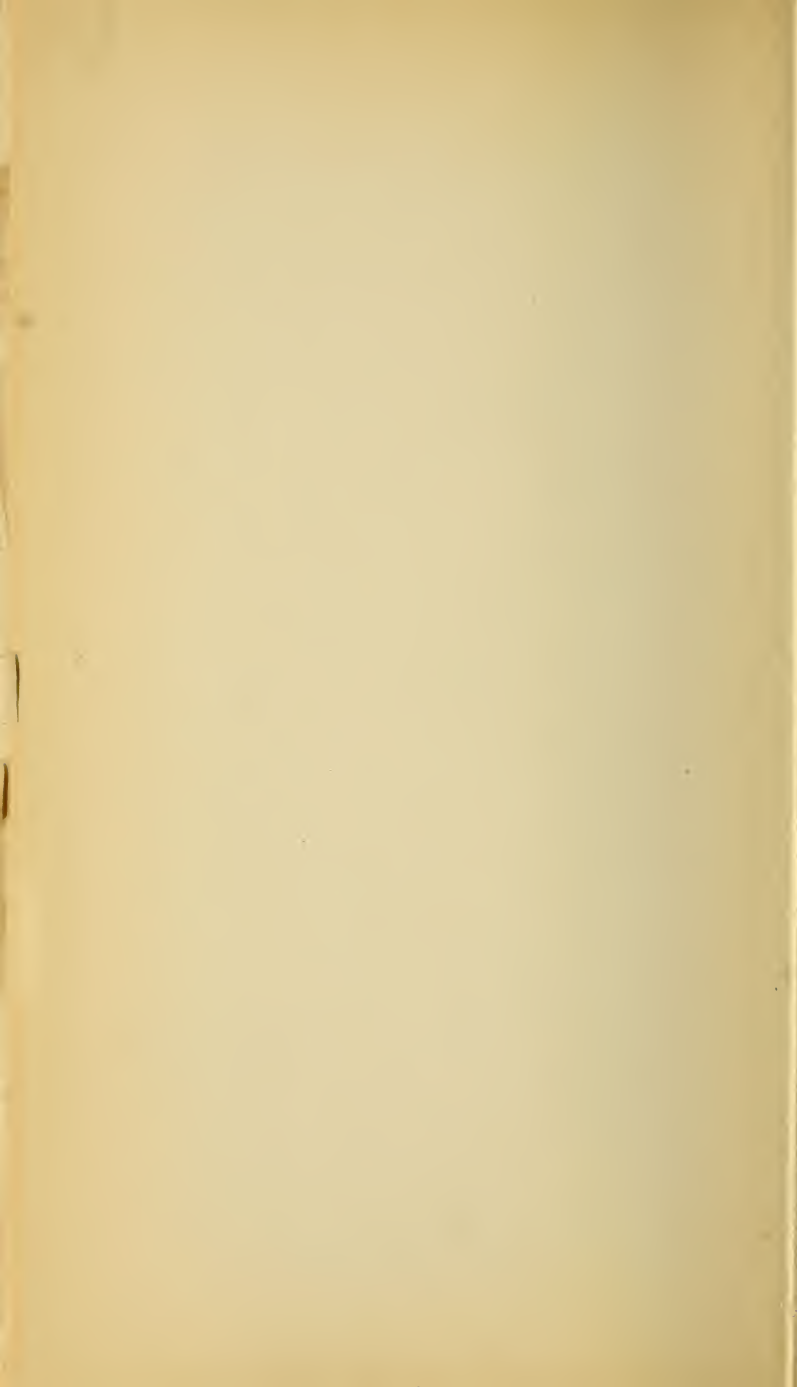


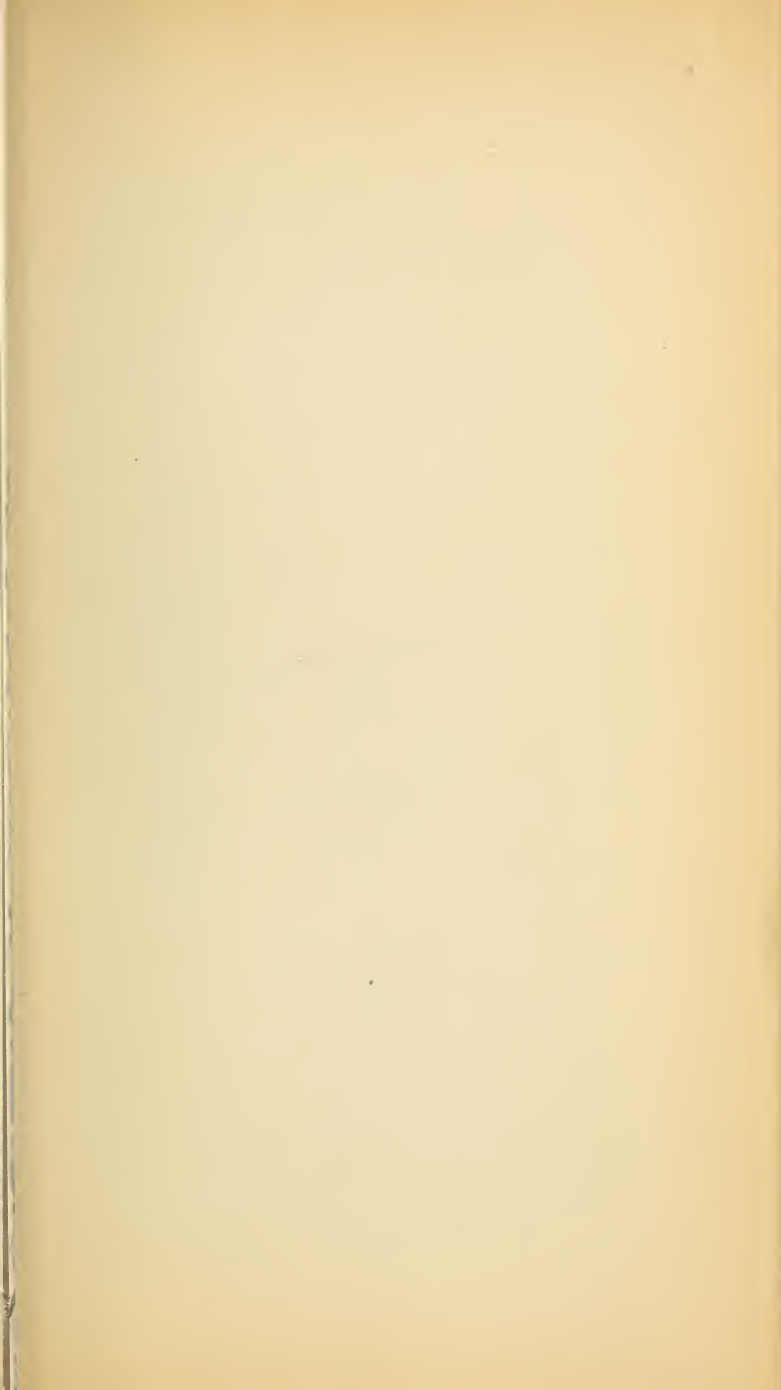


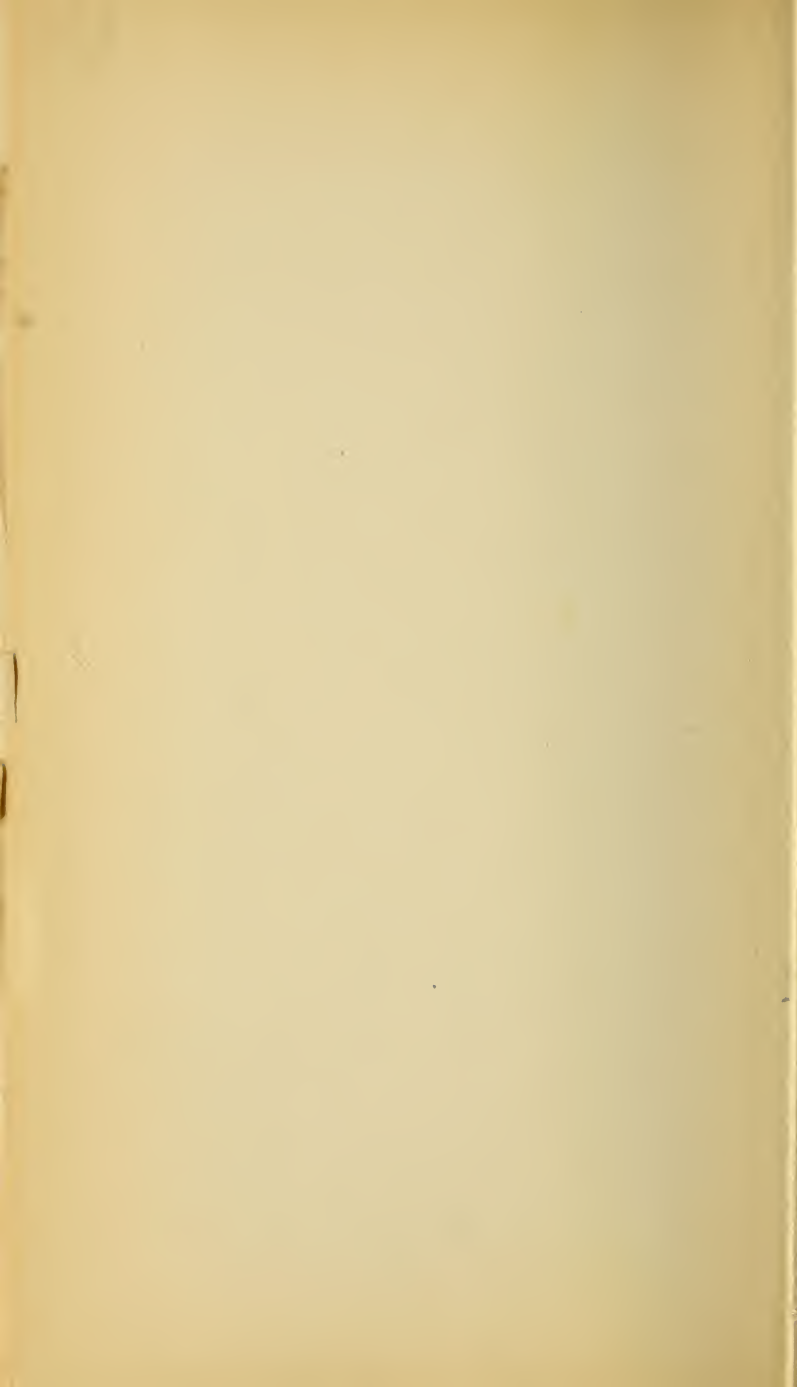


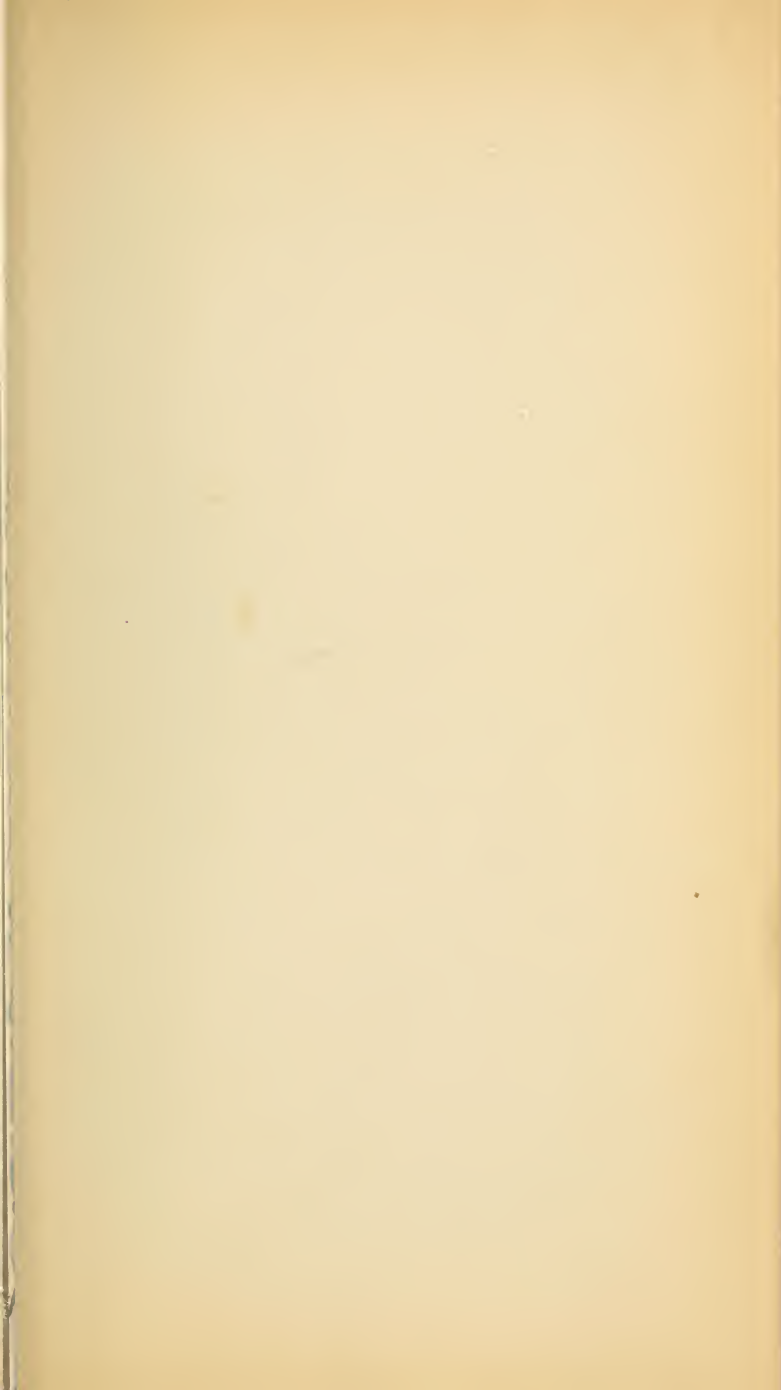


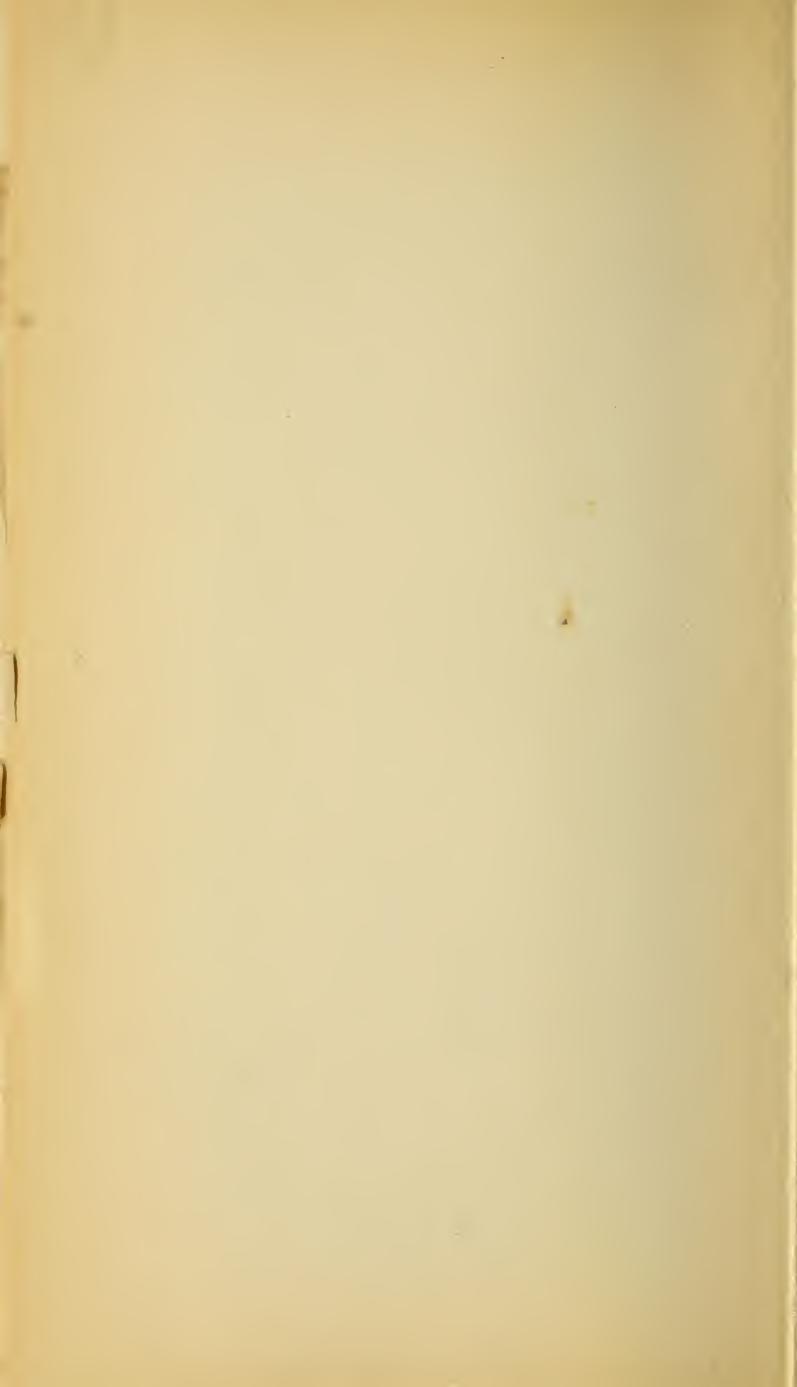


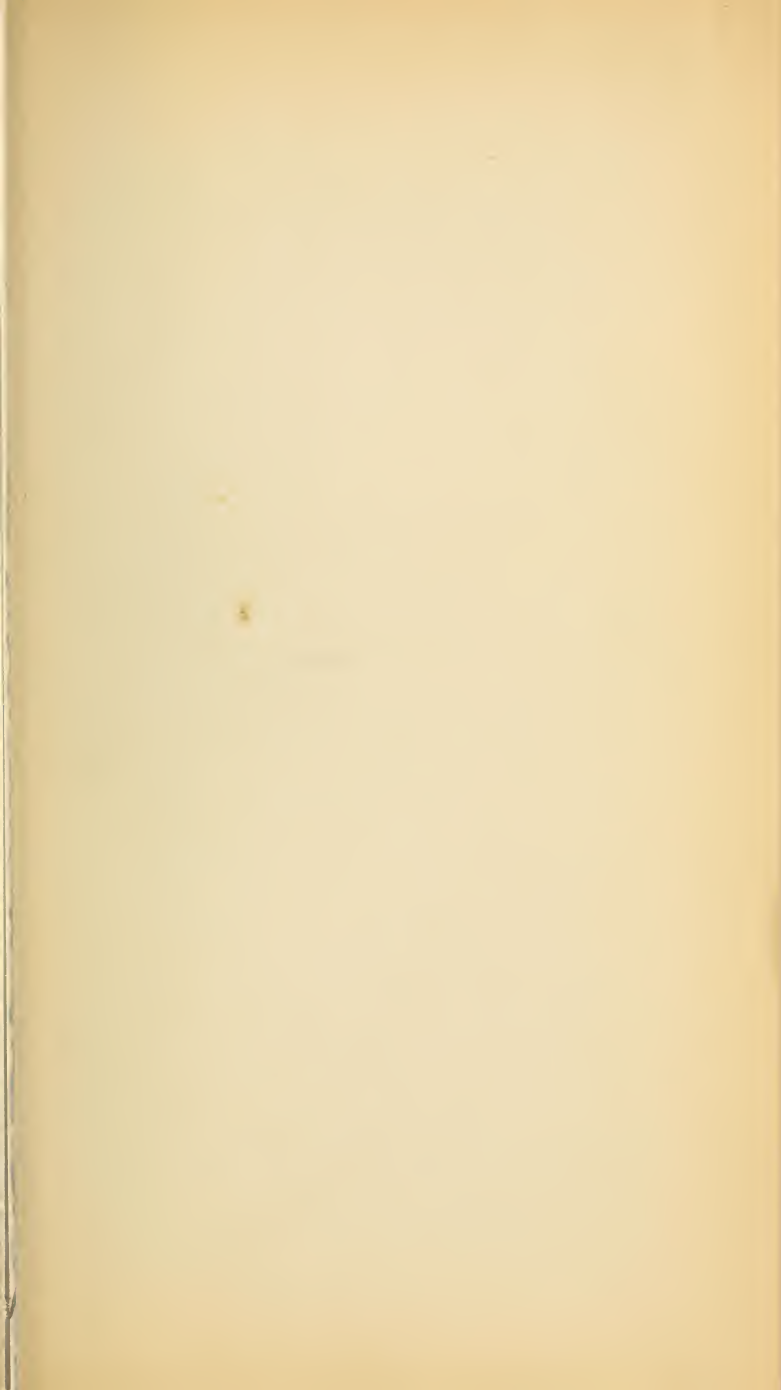


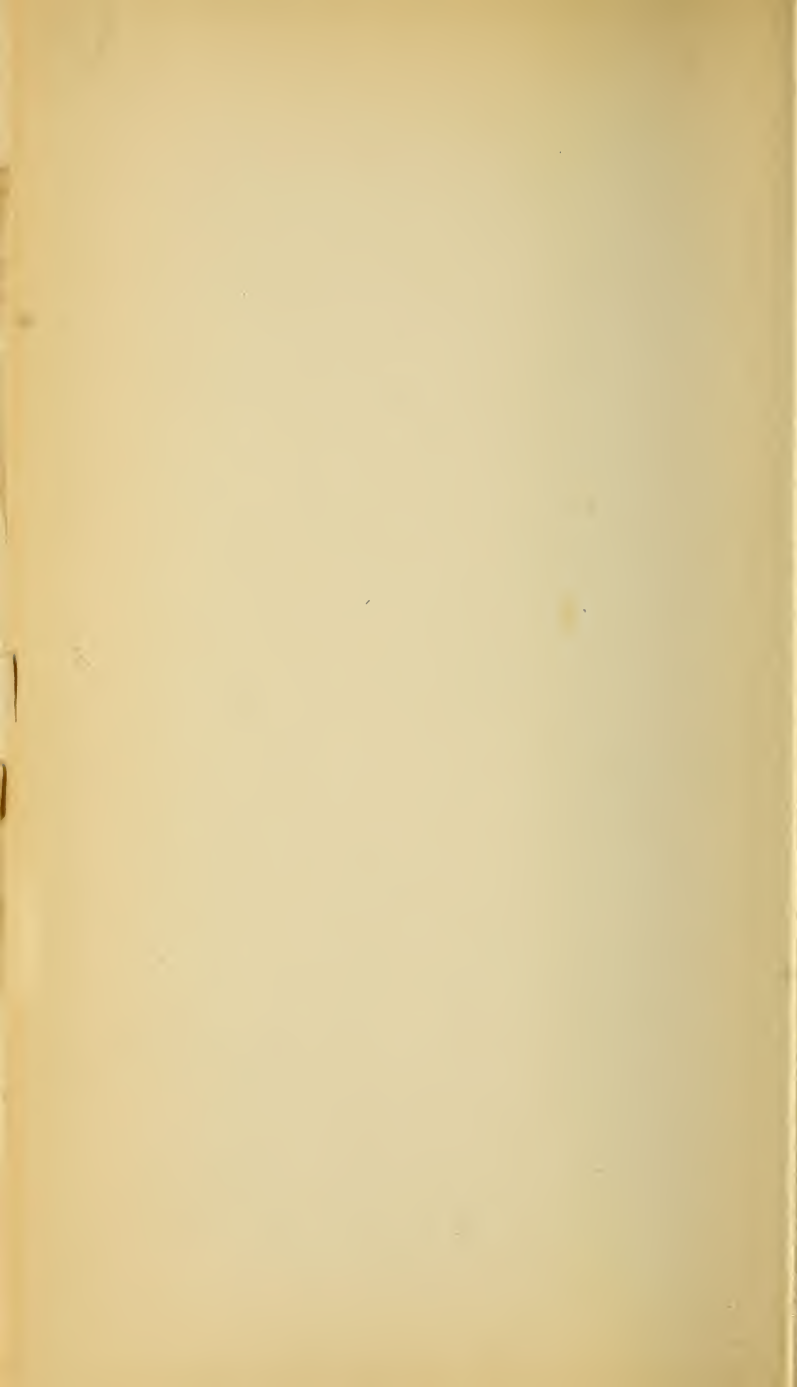


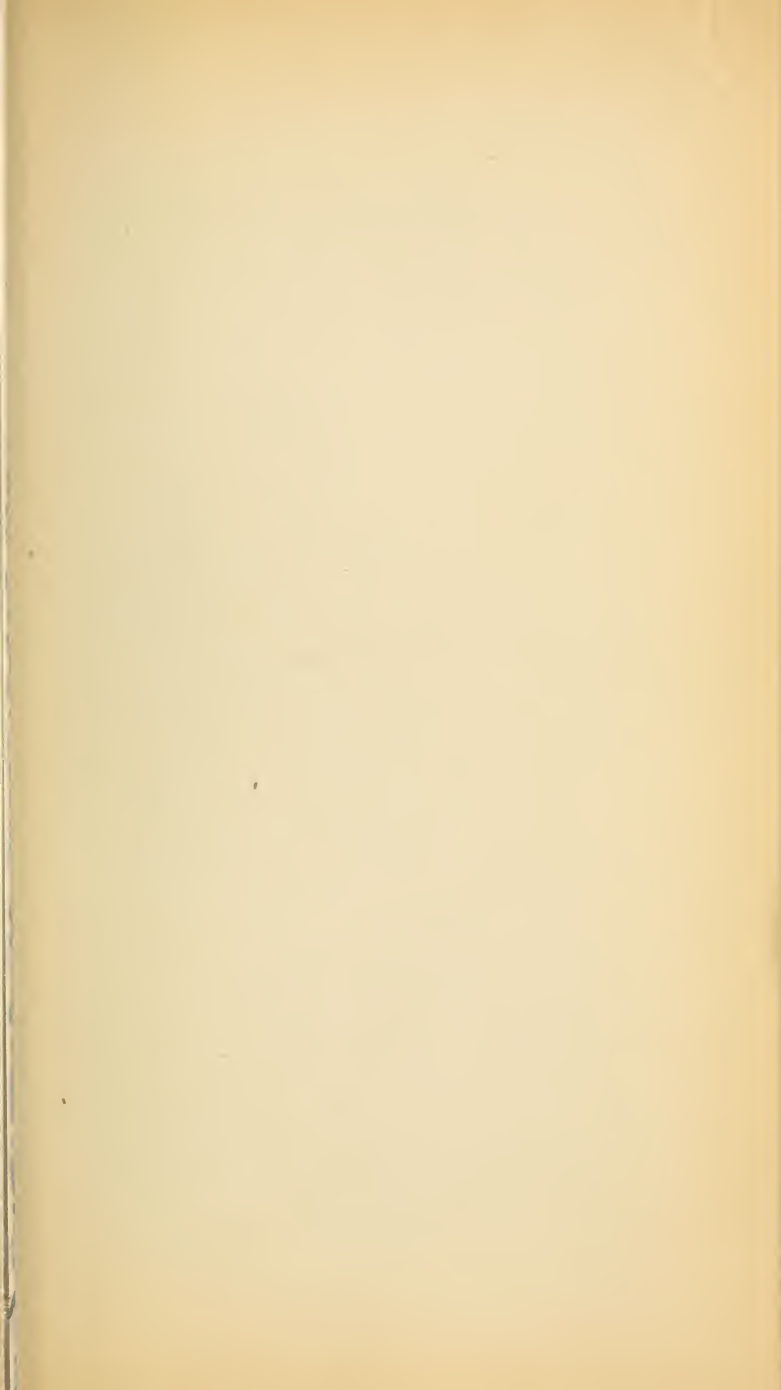


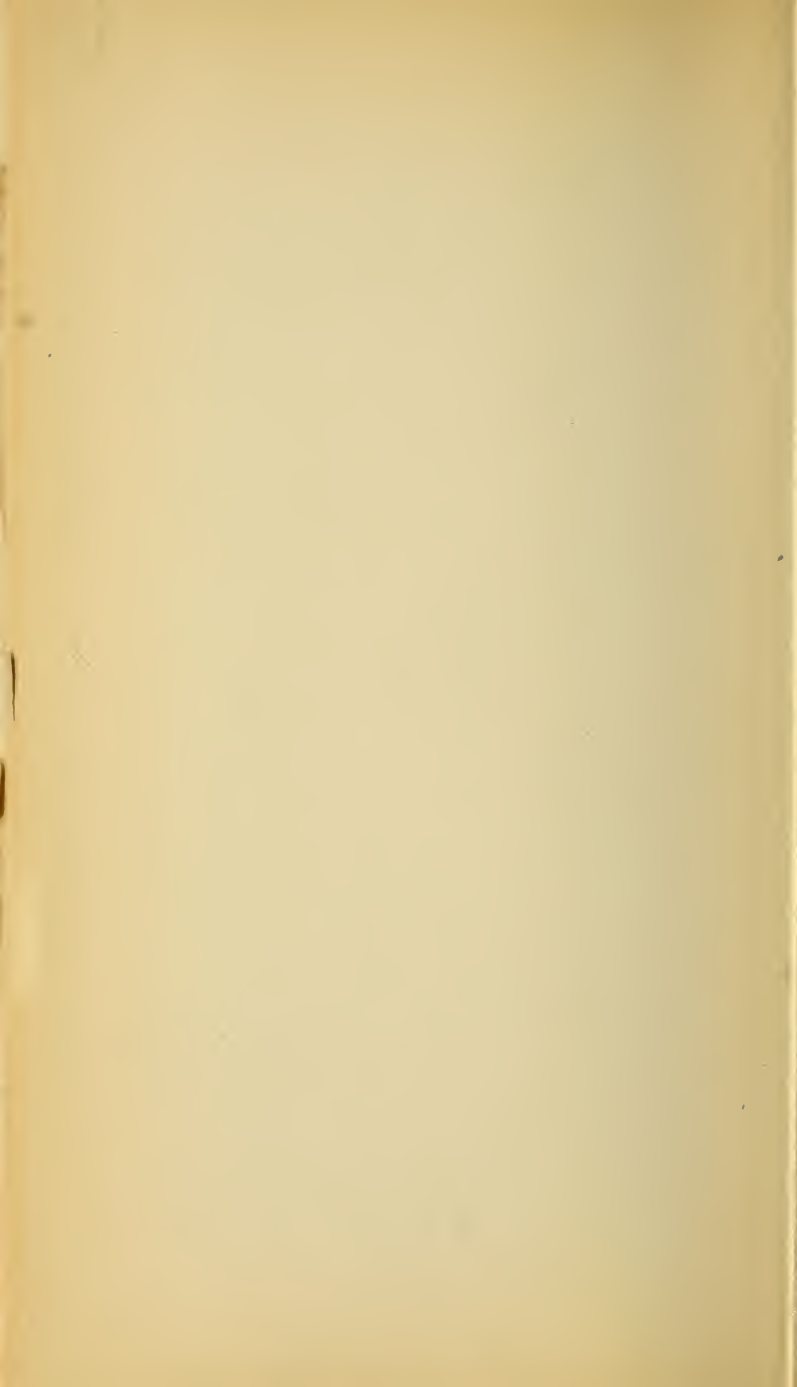


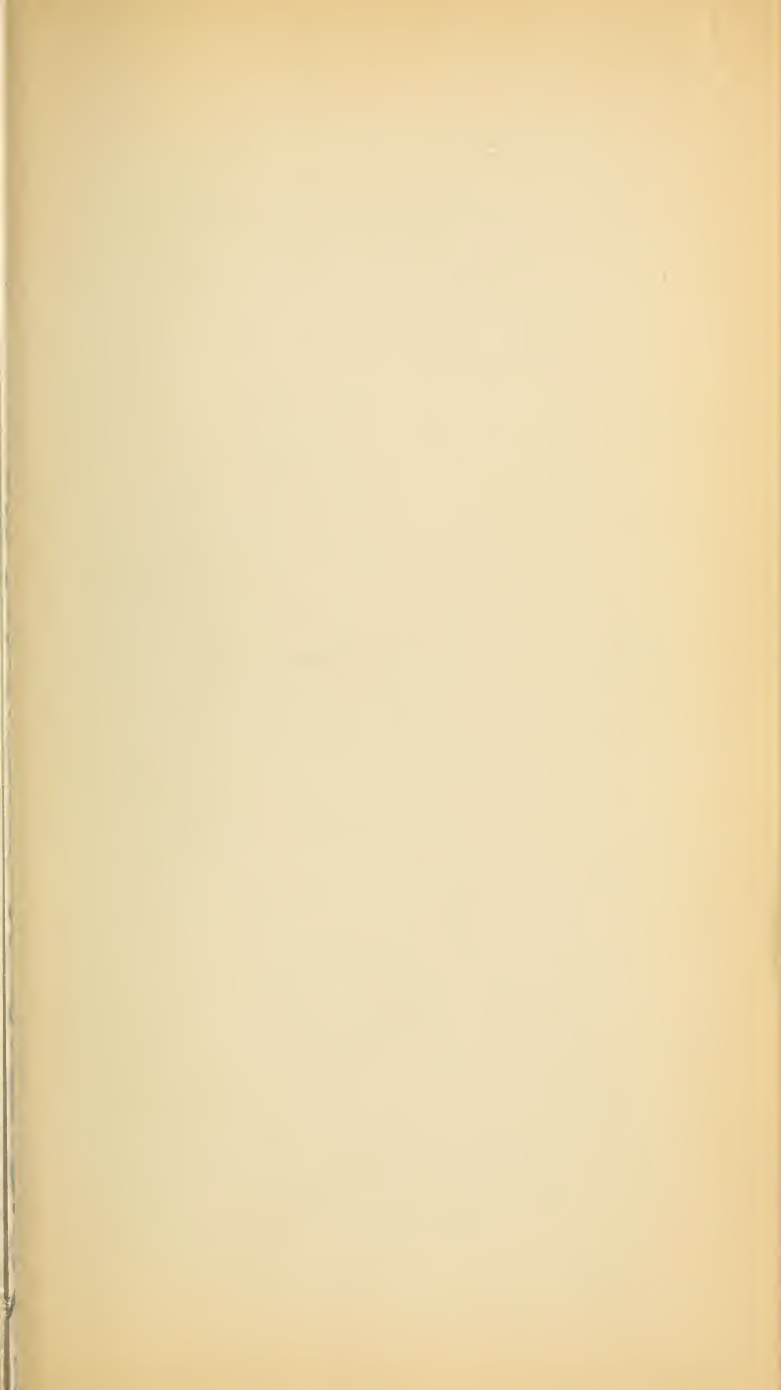


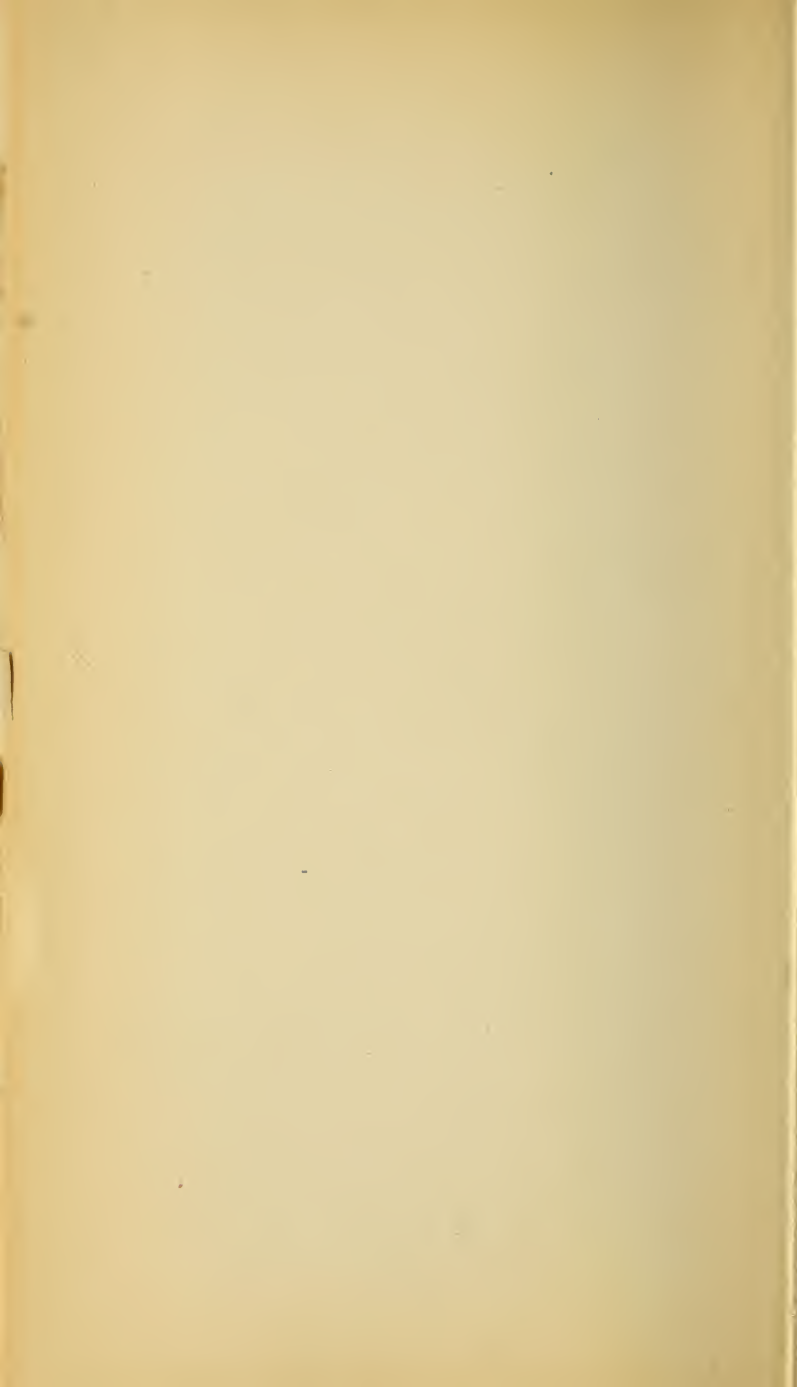


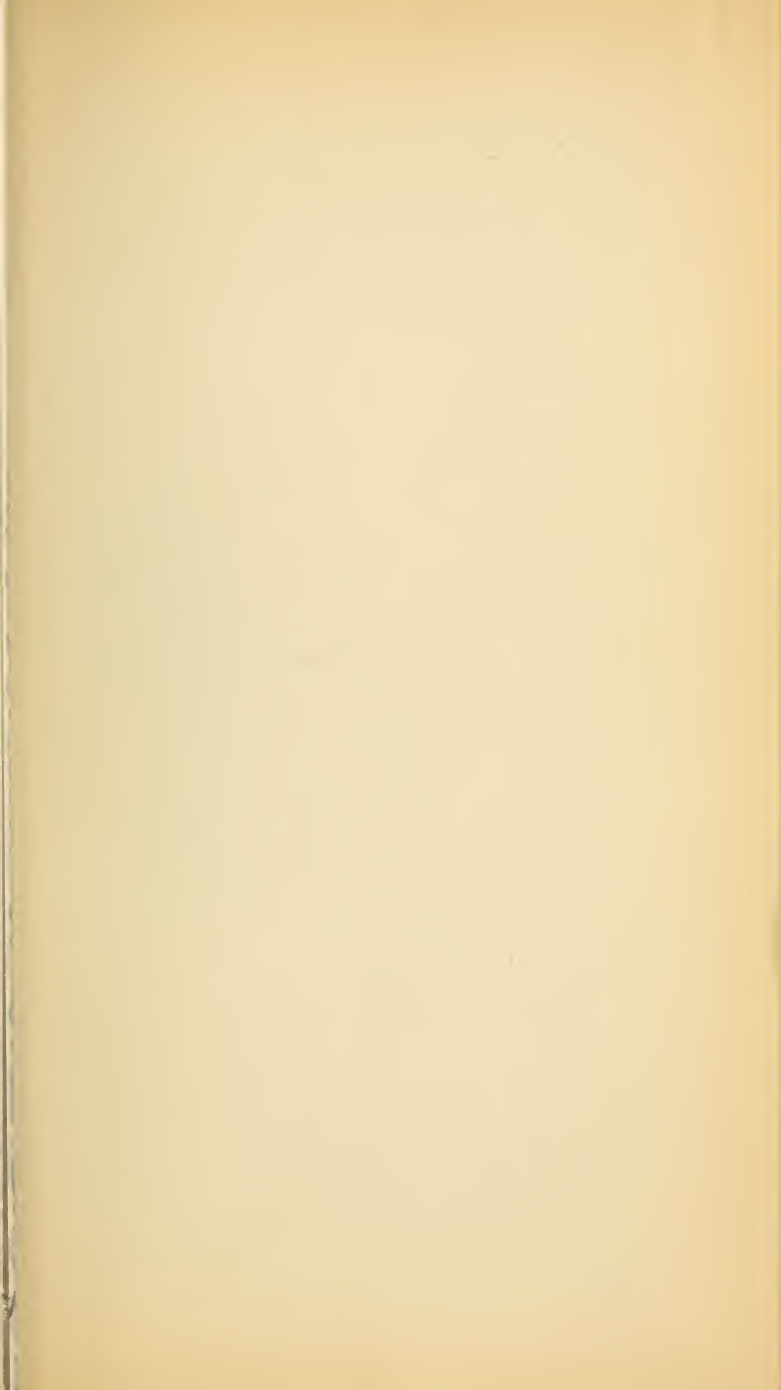


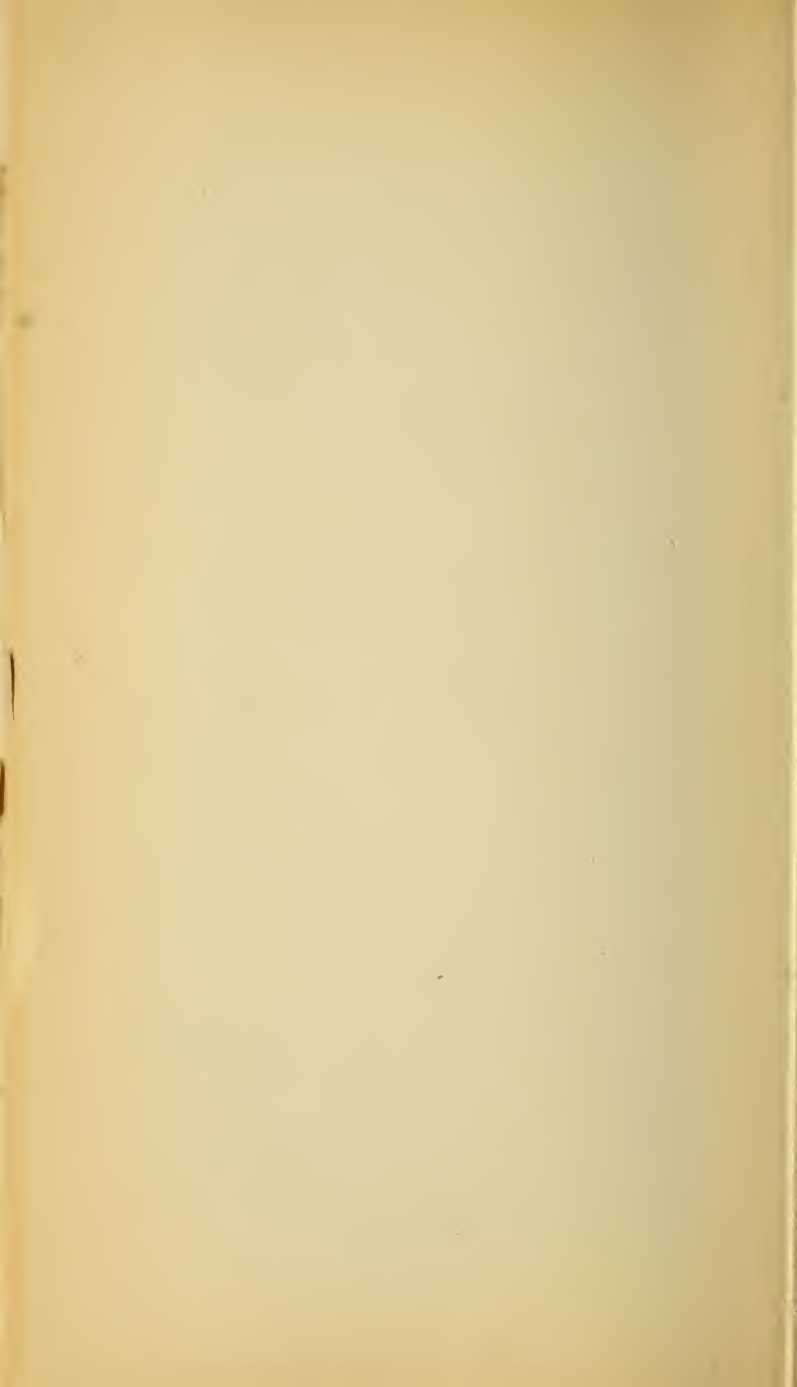


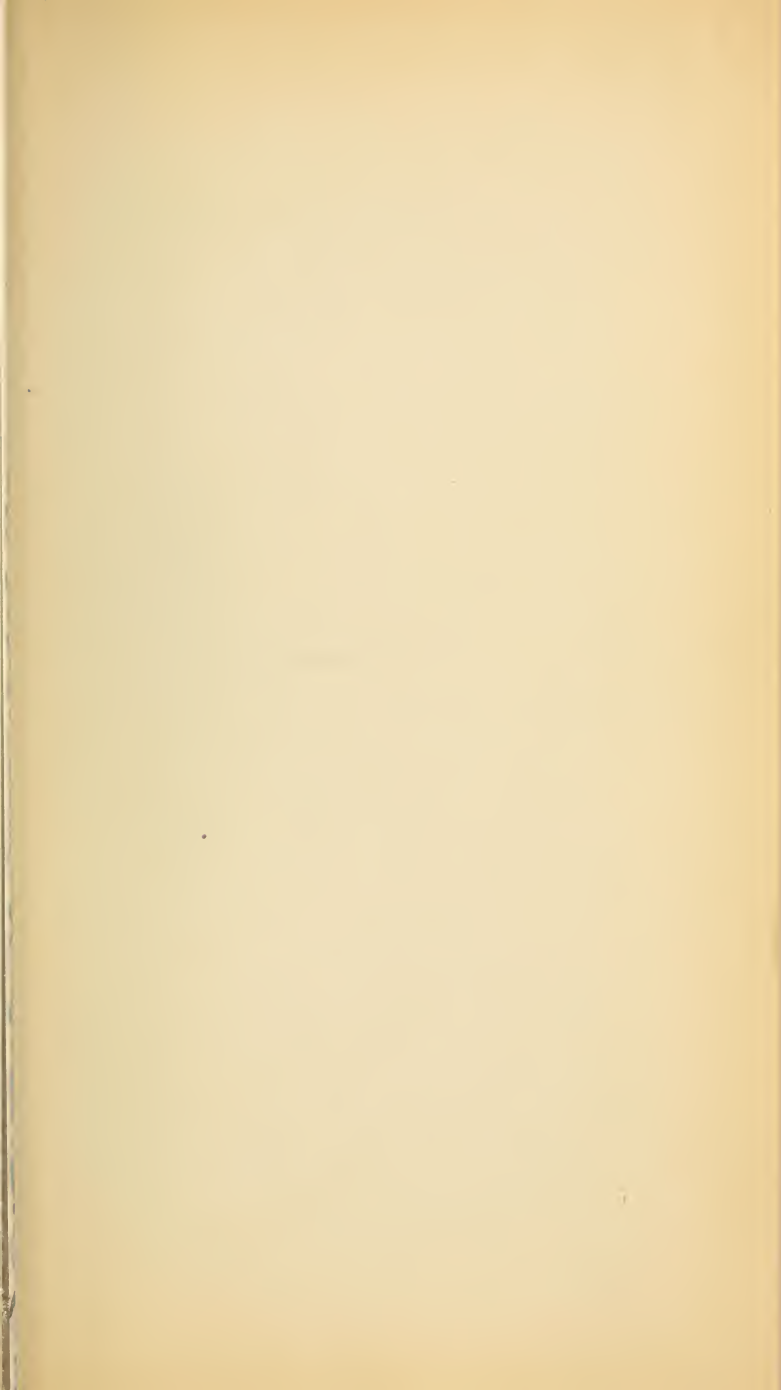


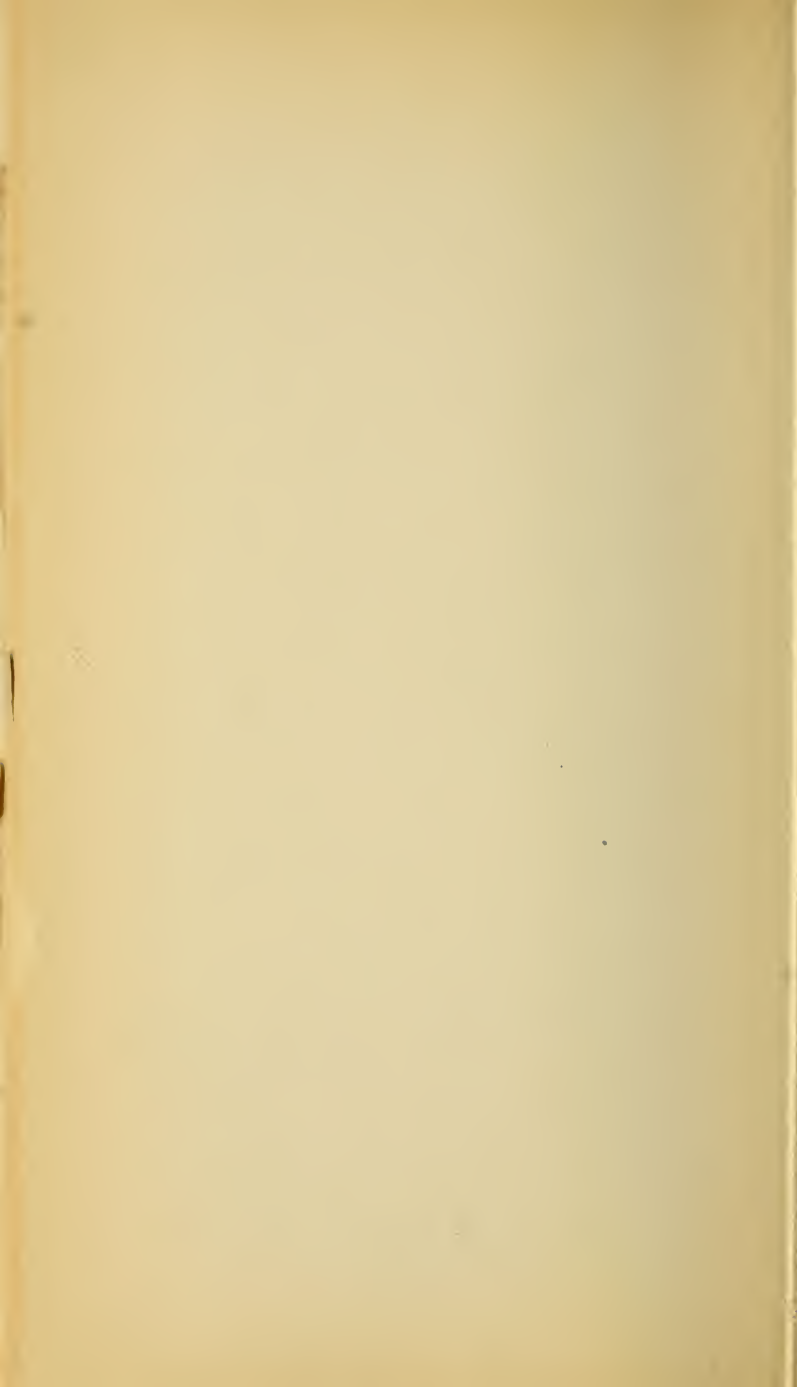


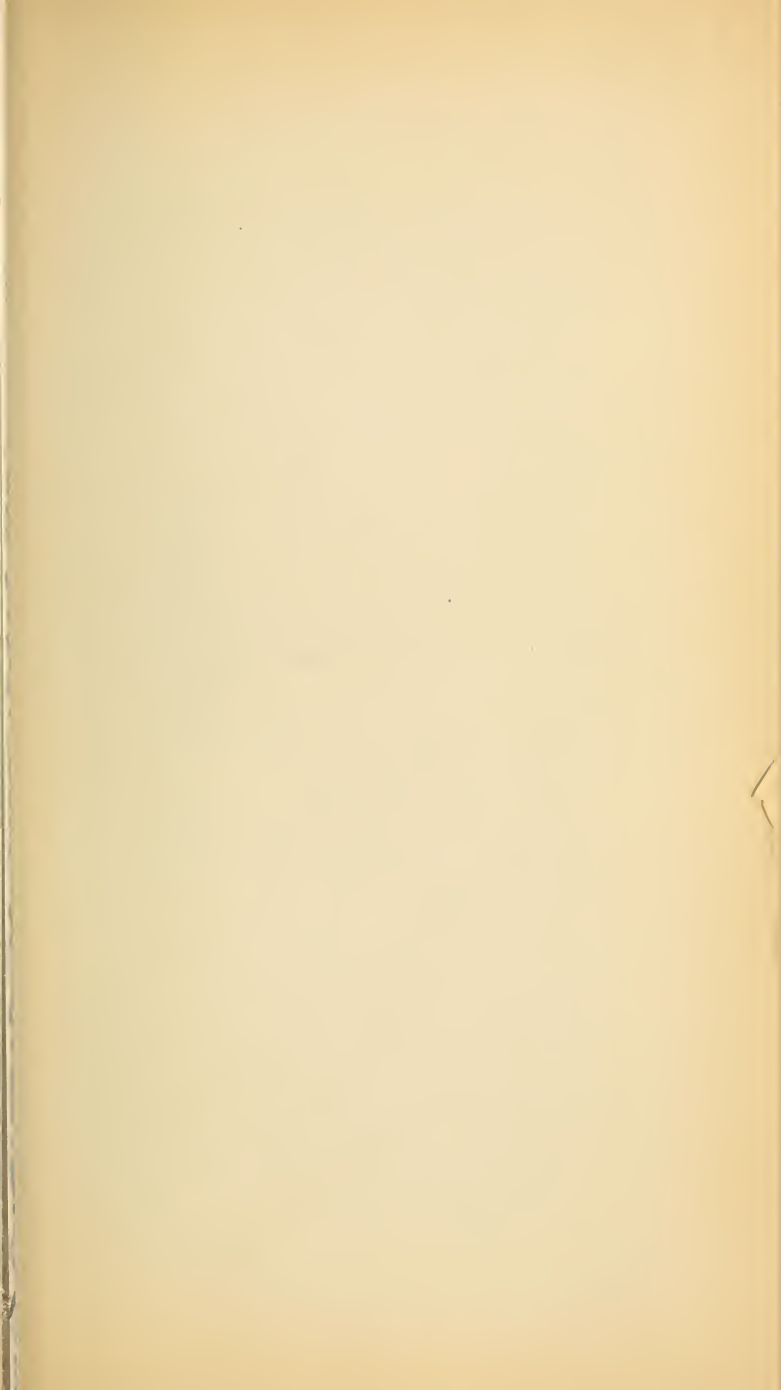


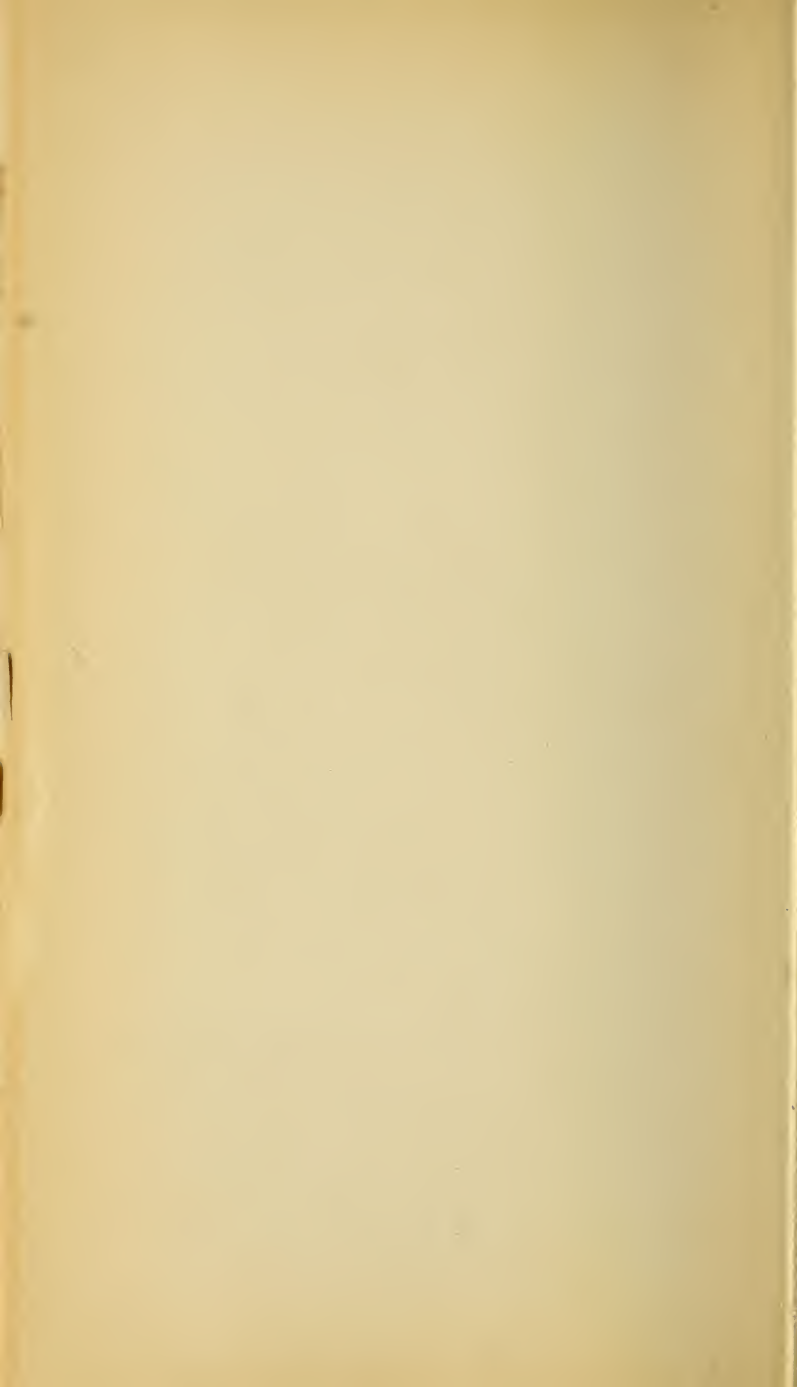


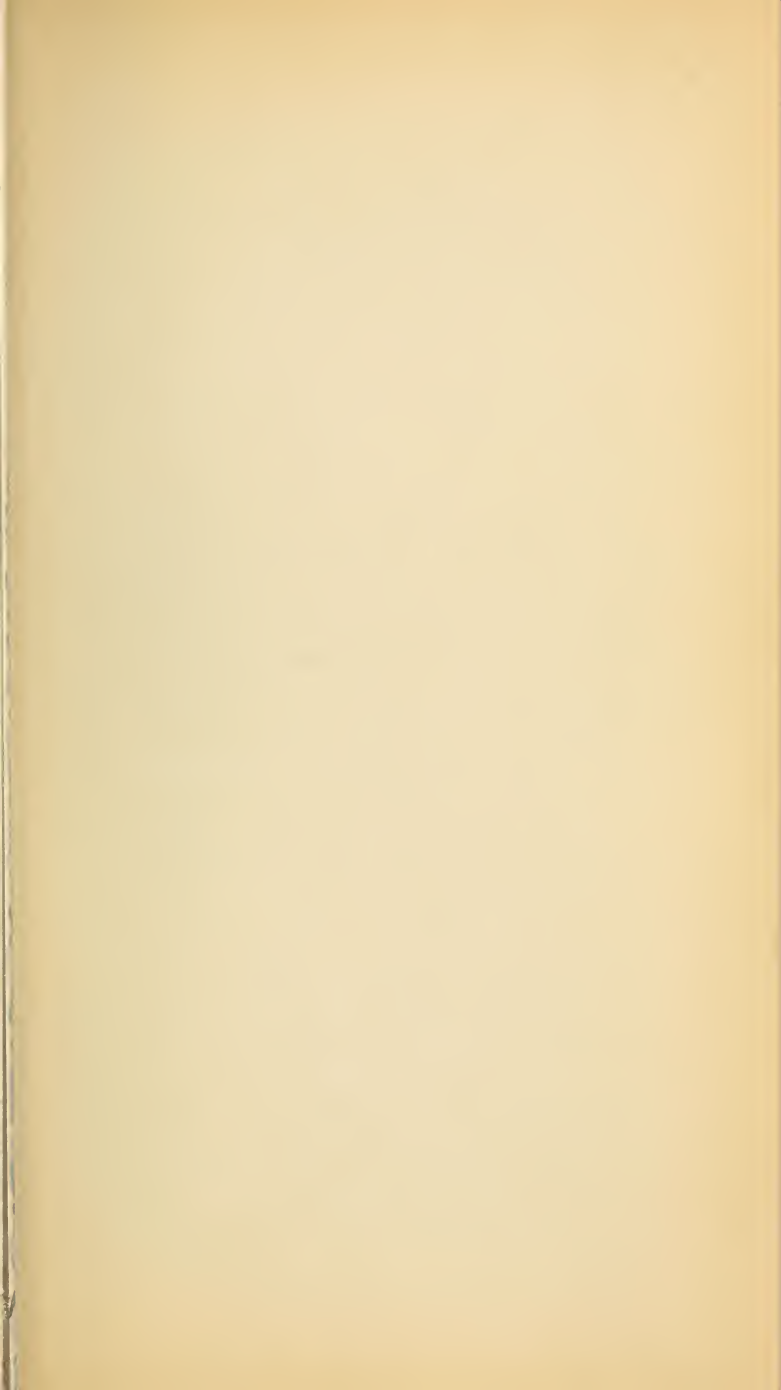


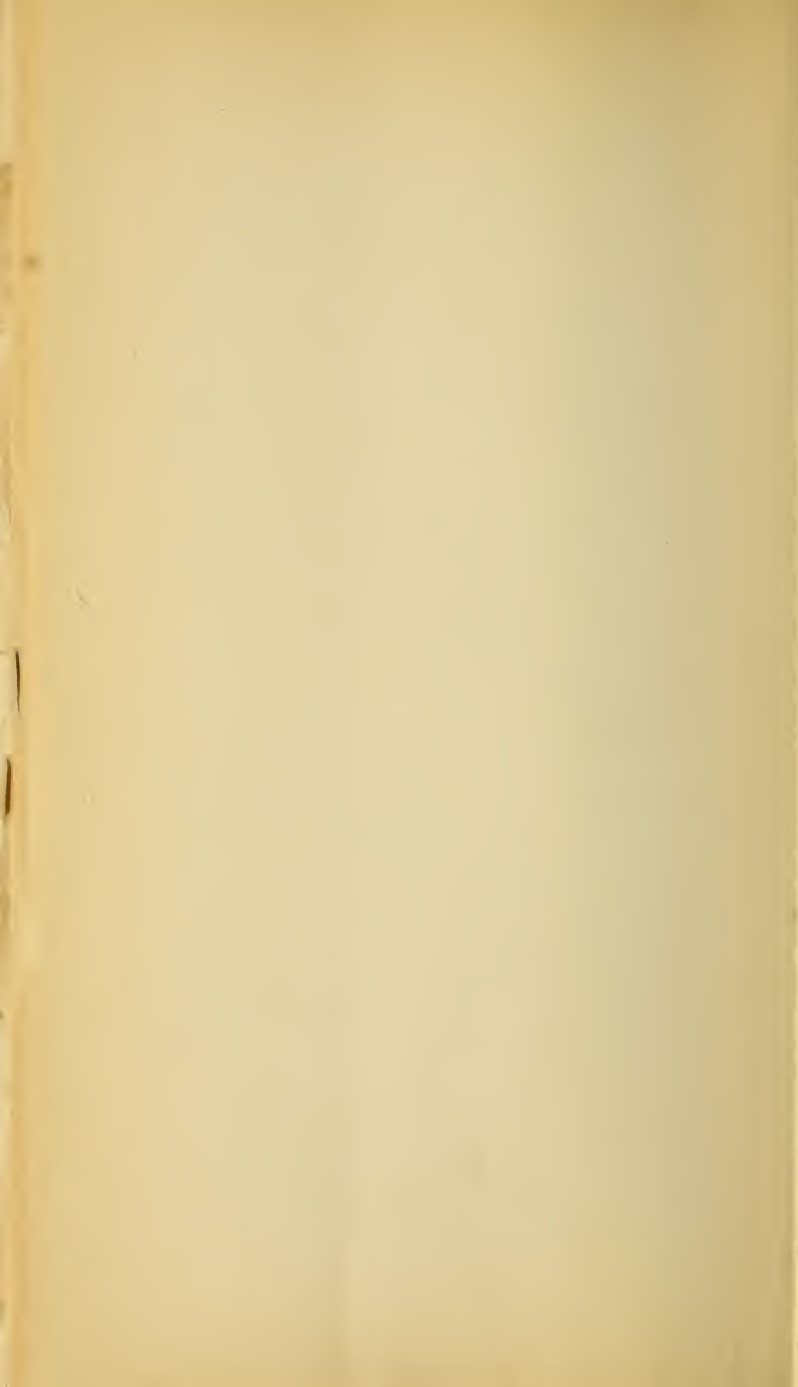


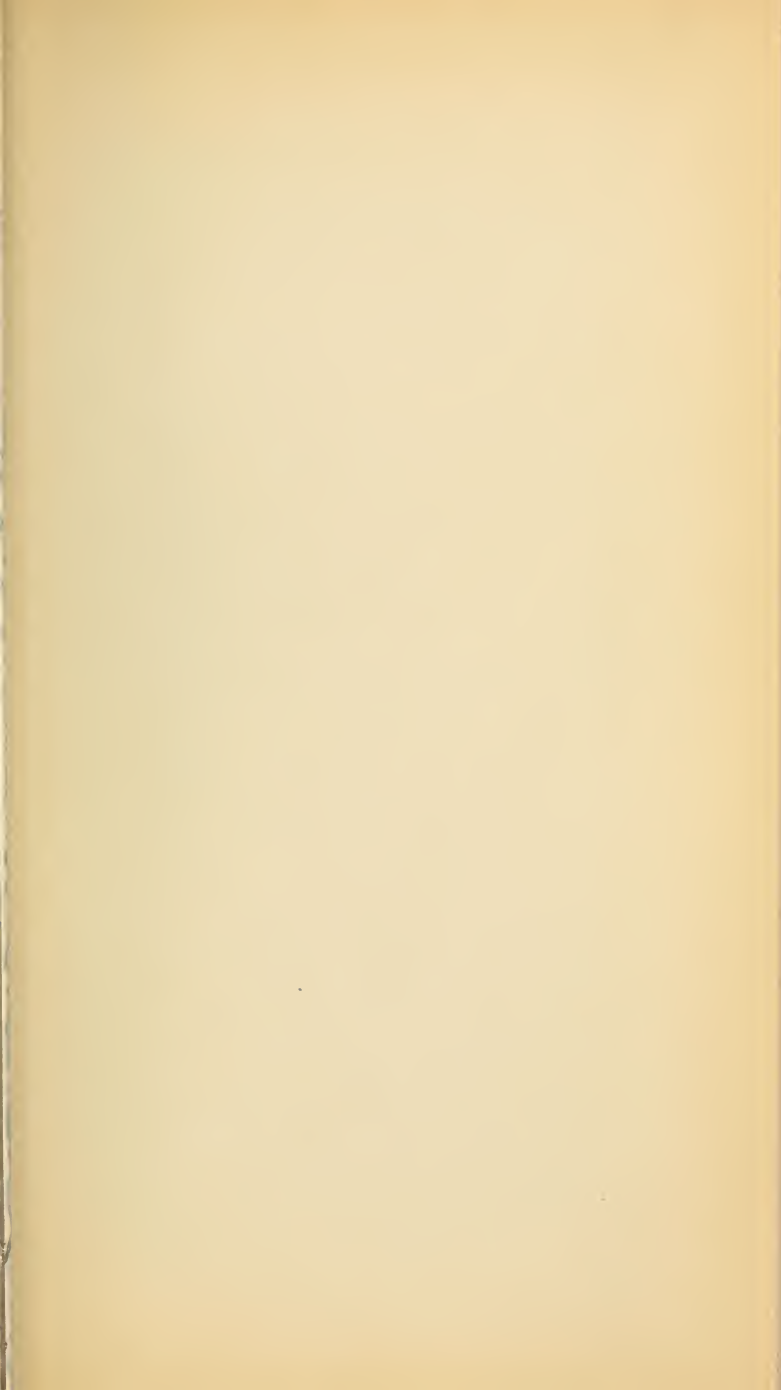


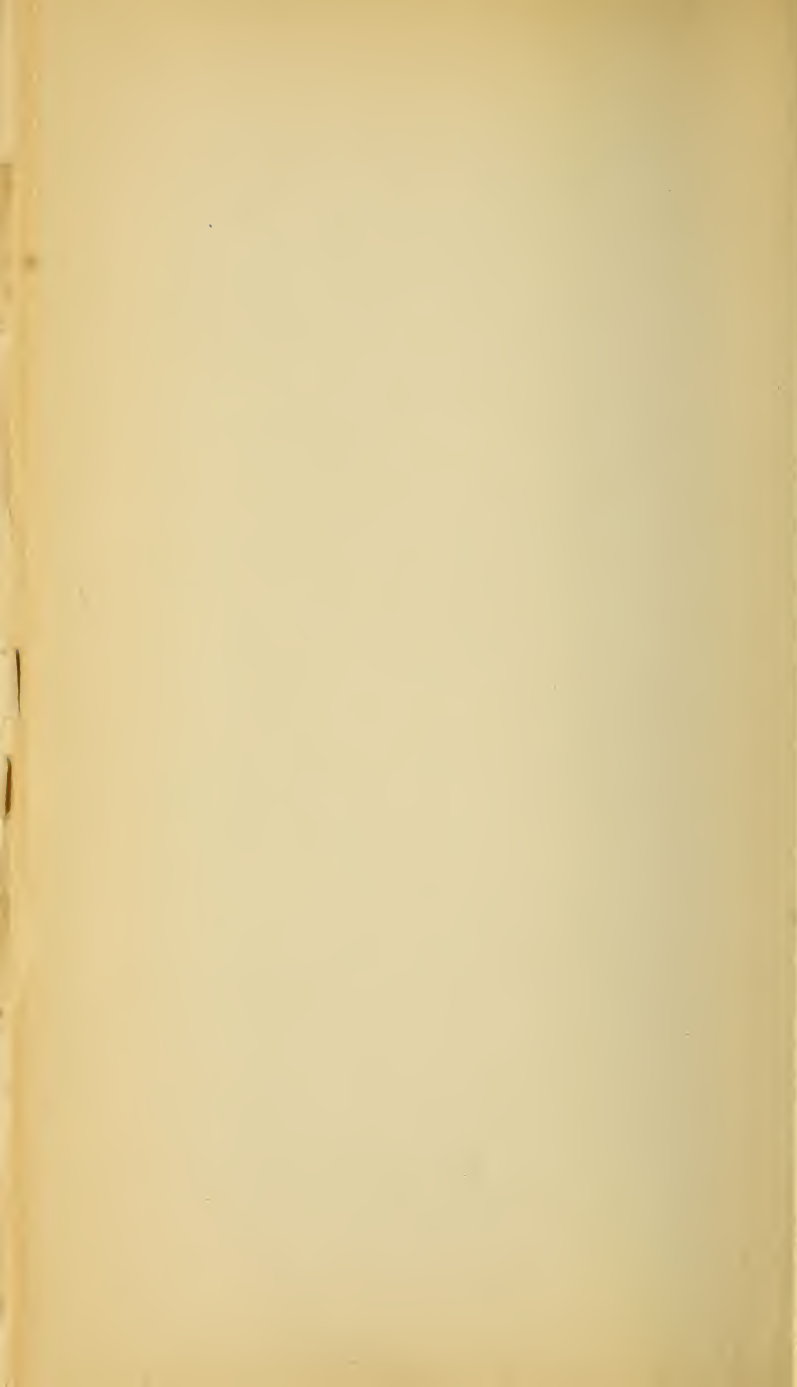


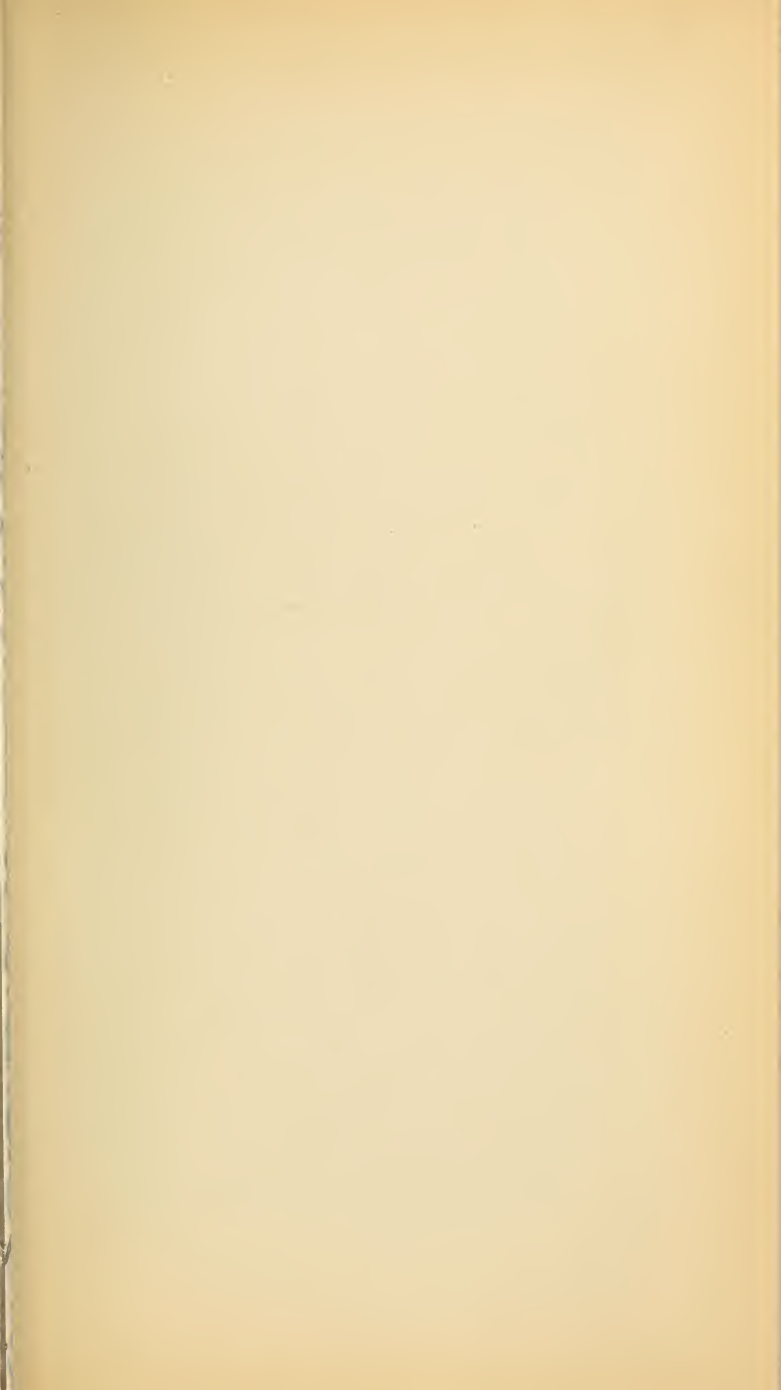


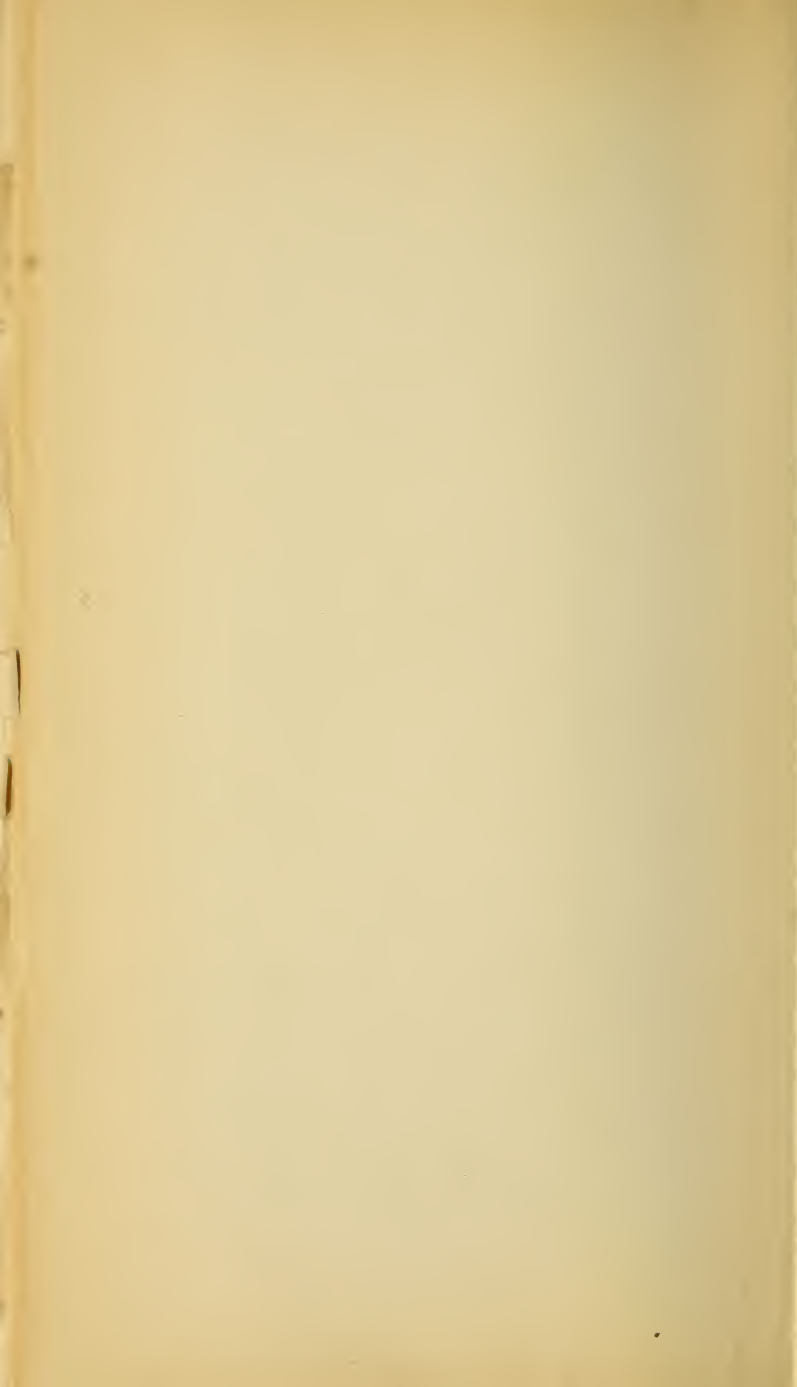


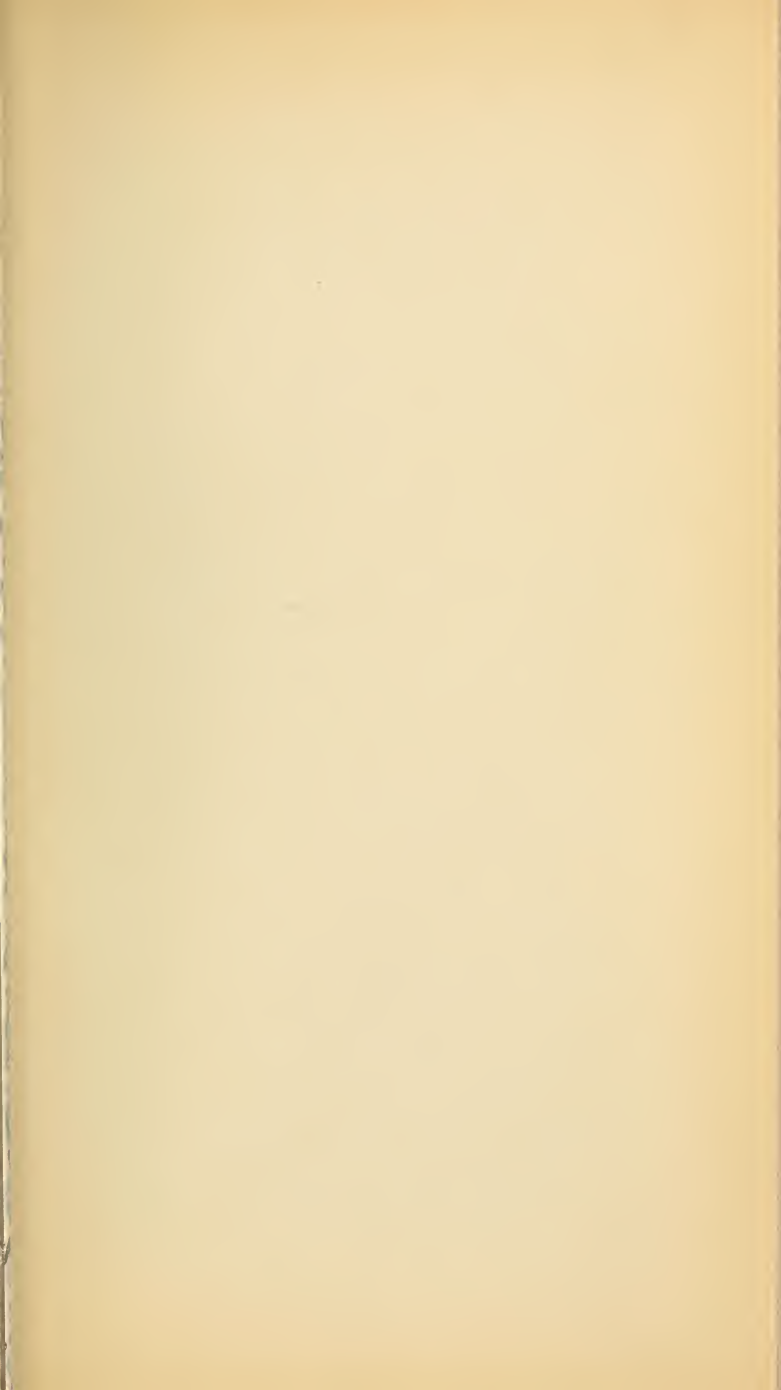


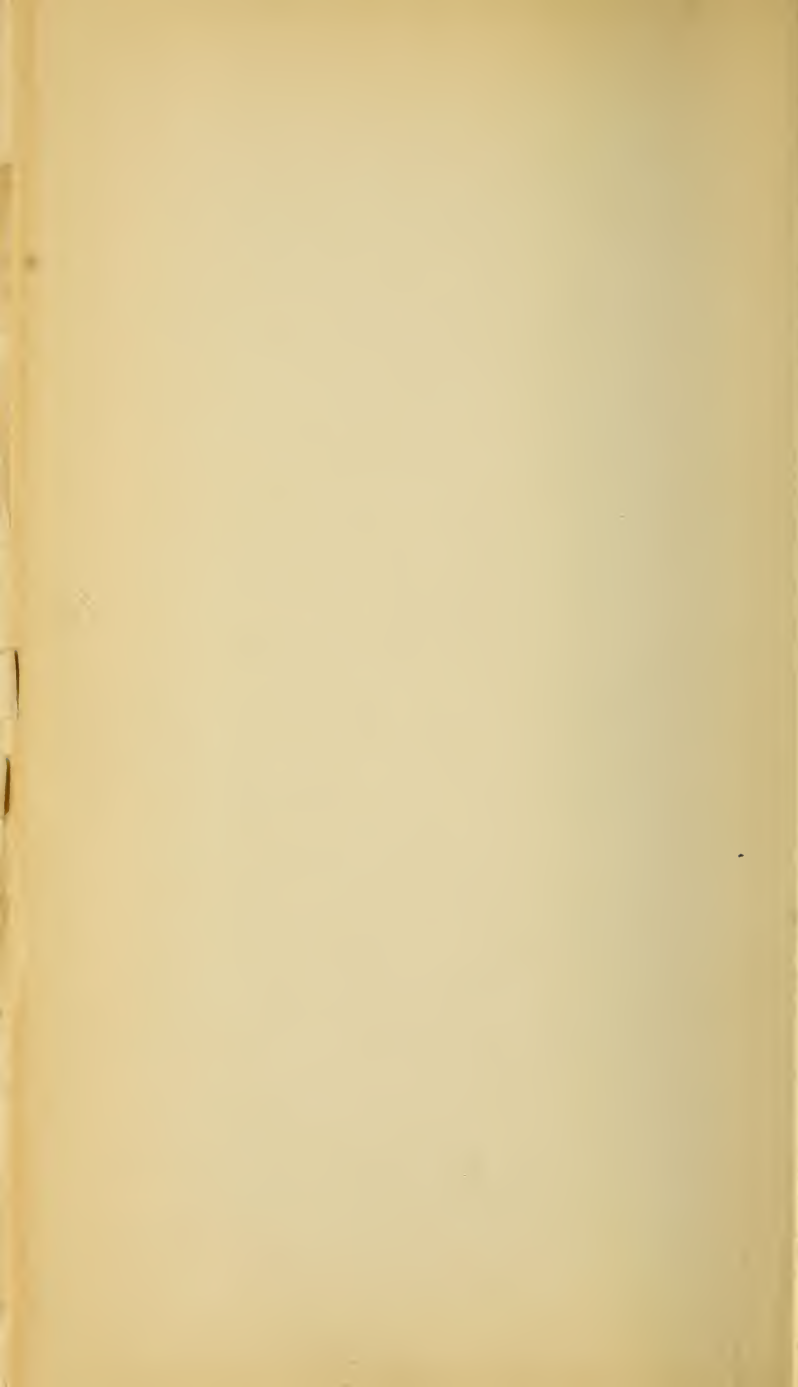


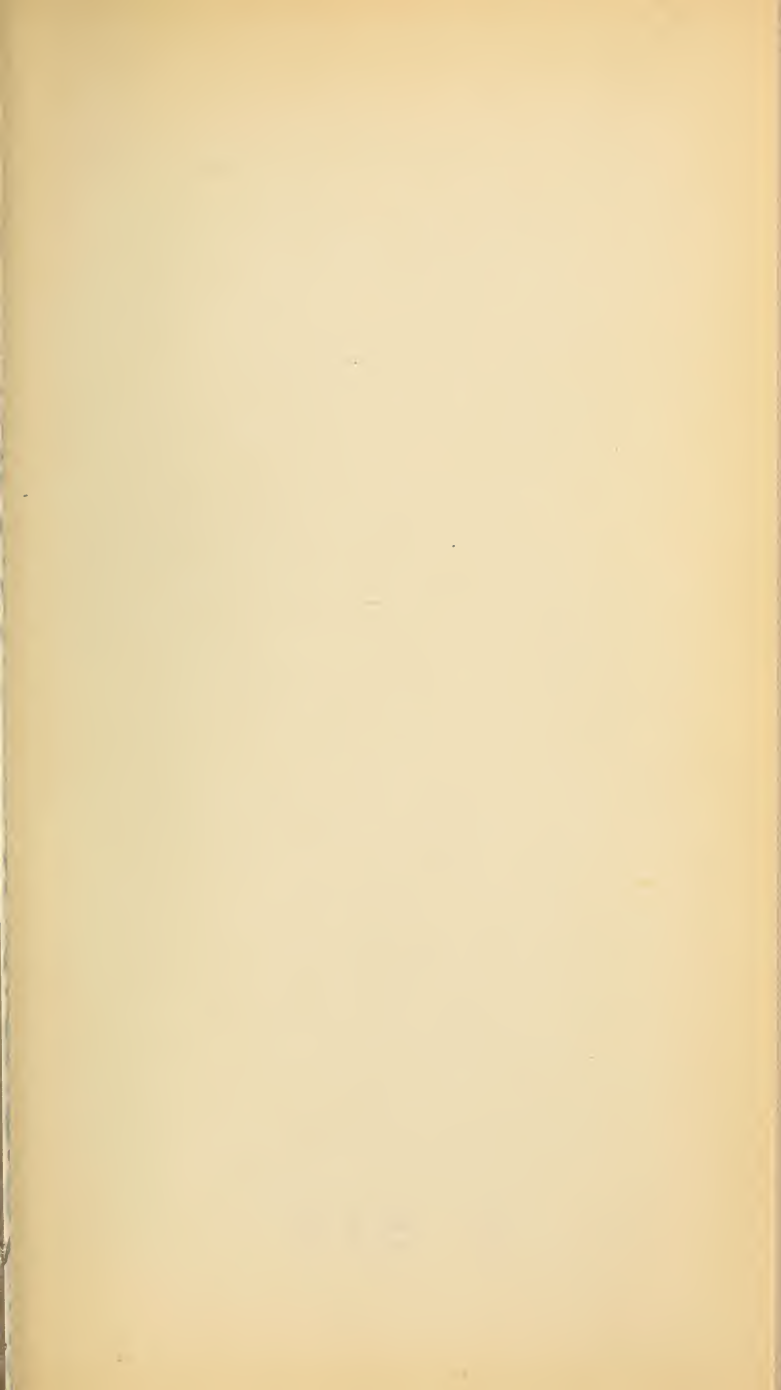




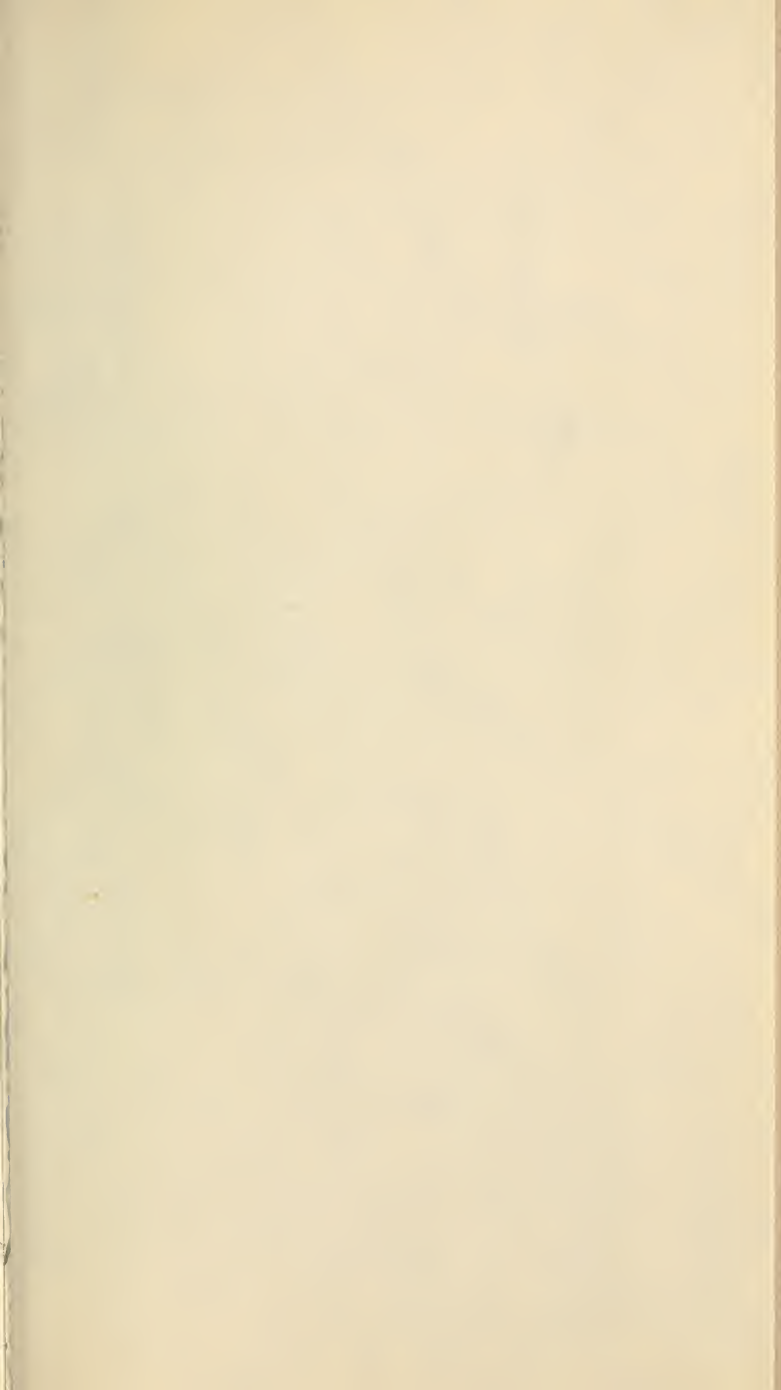


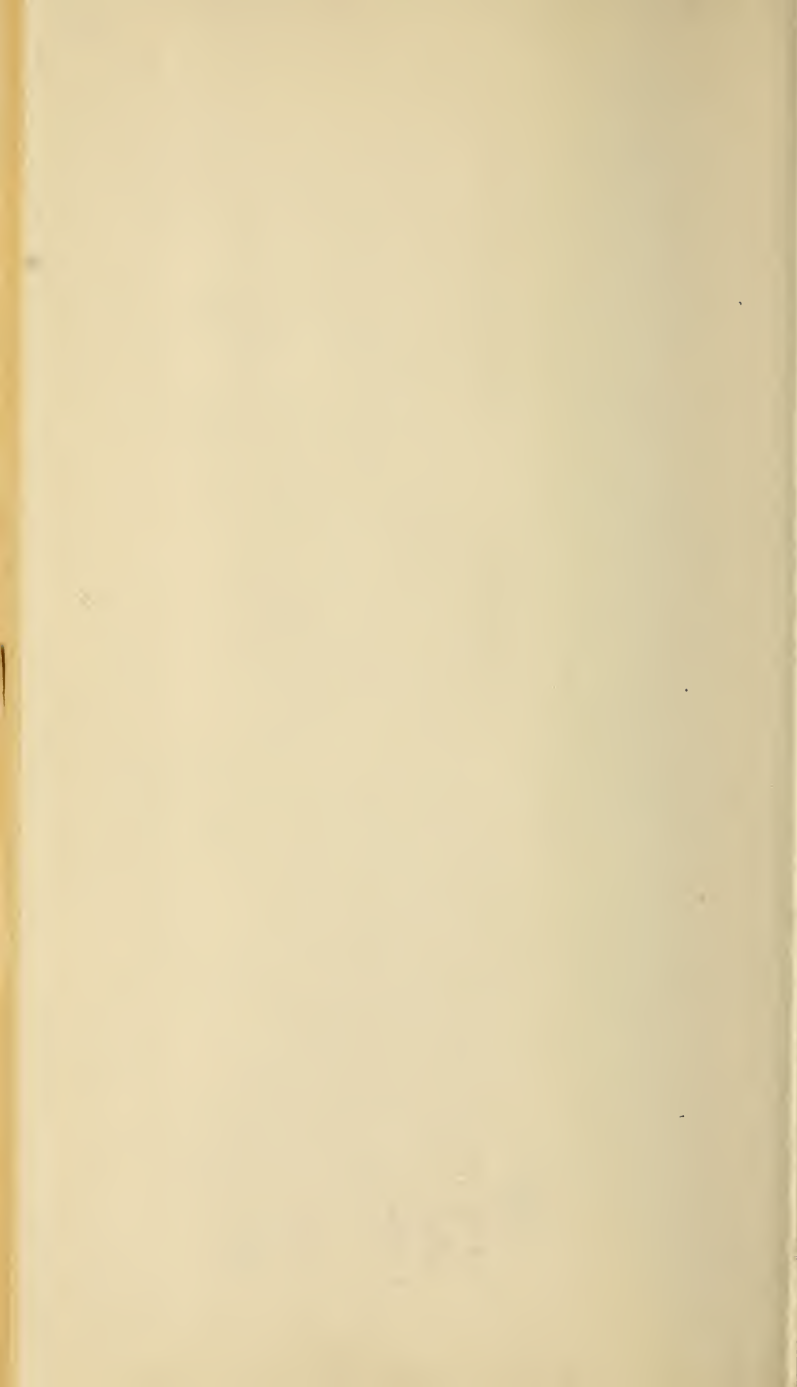


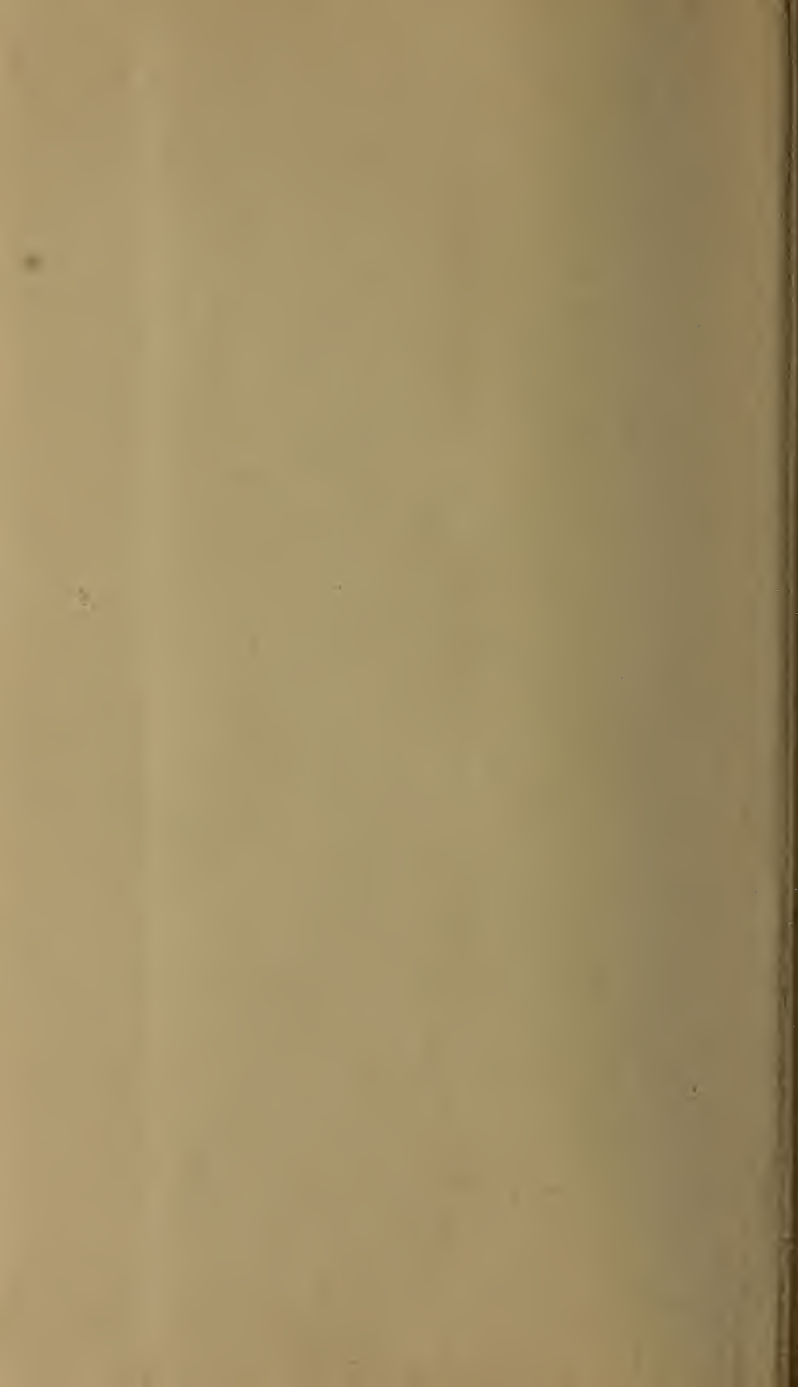


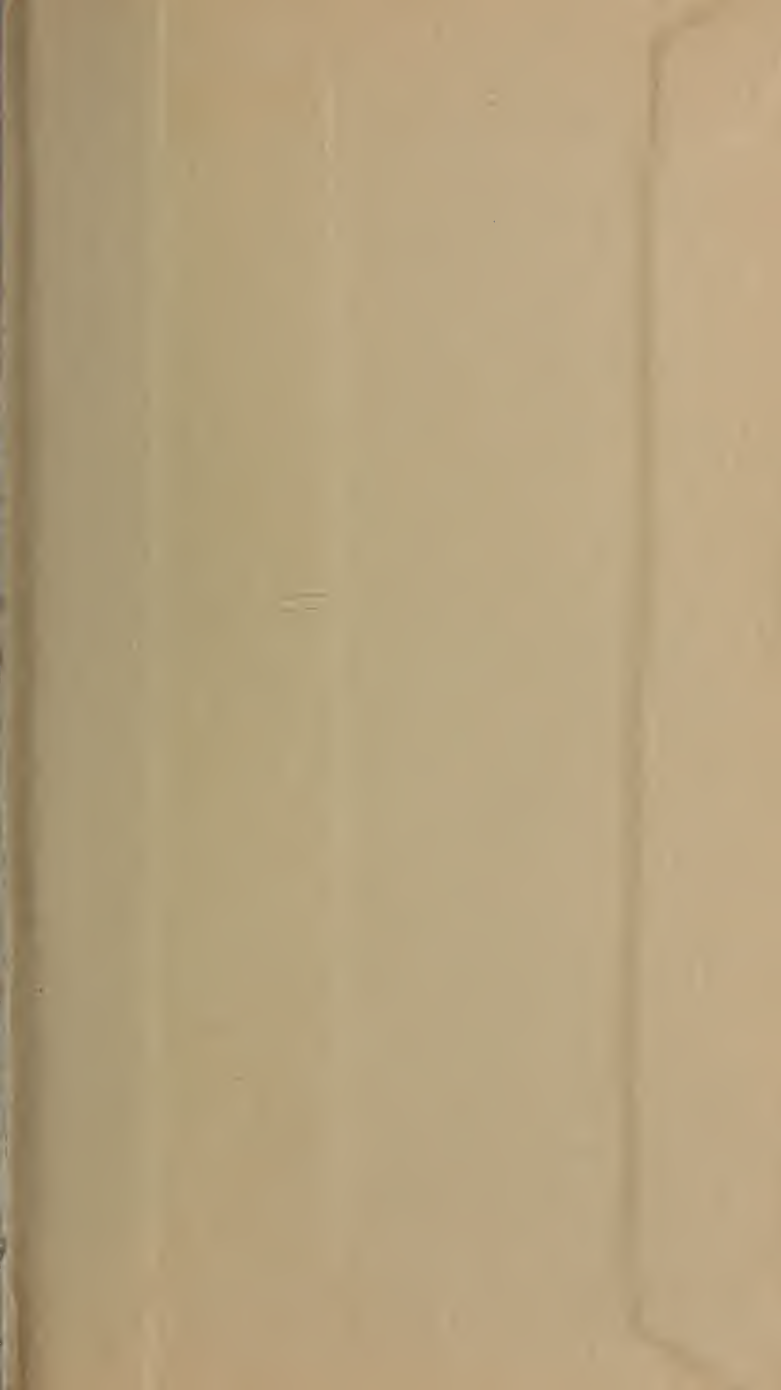


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